

John Lord 1803

THE
WORKS
OF the MOST REVEREND
Dr. JOHN TILLOTSON,
LATE
Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY:
CONTAINING
Two Hundred and Fifty Four
SERMONS
AND
DISCOURSES
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS.
TOGETHER WITH THE
RULE of FAITH.

To which is Added,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the Principal Matters.

V O L. IV.

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D U B L I N :

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TO

HIS SACRED MAJESTY

King WILLIAM,

THESE

SERMONS

ARE

Most Humbly Dedicated,

By the Author's Relict,

ELIZ. TILLOTSON.

TO

7

His Sacred Majesty

King William

THESE

SERMONS



ARE

Most Humbly Dedicated,

By the Author's Relic,

John T. Johnson

THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

THE AUTHOR of these Sermons was so well known, particularly for his most excellent and useful discourses from the Pulpit, that I shall not attempt, by any thing I can say, to recommend them to the publick. I know very well, they have already that credit in the world, which will render any apology needless; especially when, by this publication of them, they shall speak for themselves.

I think it requisite, only to assure the reader, that they are what they pretend to be, the genuine works of that great man.

Whilst I had the happiness of conversing with him, he was pleas'd (at my request) to instruct me in the character in which he wrote all his Sermons: and some of these now published, having been transcribed by me some years since, were found amongst his papers, corrected with his own hand.

By what he had been pleas'd to say, that I was master of his character, and by the few Errata he ob-

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A

serv'd

P R E F A C E.

serv'd in my first performance, I was encouraged to set about this work; in which I can solemnly profess, that I have observed a religious care and strictness, neither to omit nor add any thing, but an of, a the, or the like, when the sense plainly required it; and of that too I have given notice, by affixing this mark (") upon the word which I did not find in the original; so that the reader is left to judge of the fitness of such additions; which, after all, are so very few and inconsiderable, as scarcely to deserve this notice; only that he might be satisfied (in case the Printer do his part) that he hath here, what he expects, a perfect transcript of these Sermons; and in them a true and lively strain of christian piety and eloquence, so fitted to all capacities, that I cannot but hope, all that shall read them will be the better for them, even those not excepted (if there be any such) who may have entertain'd any unreasonable prejudices against them, or their most reverend author.

I have always thought, and often said it, that if any were leaven'd with prejudice against him, they were, to be sure, such as did not know him; and the farther I go in his writings, the more I am assured that it must be so.

Lambeth,
April 2. 1695.

Ra. Barker.

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SERMON

S E R M O N I.

OF SINCERITY towards GOD and
M A N.

*Preached at KINGSTON, July 29, 1694.
The last his Grace preached.*

J O H N I. 47.

*Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith
of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom
is no guile.*

WH O this *Nathanael* was, upon whom our S E R M.
Saviour bestows this extraordinary charac- I.
ter, doth not certainly appear, his Name
being but once more mentioned in the whole history
of the Gospel: For certain, he was a good man,
who deserved this extraordinary commendation; and
none but our Saviour, who knew what was in man,
and needed not that any should tell him, could have
given it, especially of one whom he had never seen
before that time; for when *Jesus saw him coming to
him, he saith of him, behold an Israelite indeed.*

The whole nation of the *Jews* were *Israelites* by
natural descent, being the seed of *Jacob* or *Israel*; but
in a special and more excellent sense, none are esteem'd
the true posterity of *Israel*, but those who resembled
this father of their nation in true piety and goodness;
for (as the Apostle reasons) *they are not all Israel who
are of Israel*; they only are *Israelites* indeed who re-
semble good old *Jacob*, in the sincerity of his piety,
and the simplicity of his temper and disposition; for

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

S E R M. our Saviour seems here to allude to that character which

I. is given of *Jacob*, (Gen. 25. 27.) That *he was a plain man*, or, as the *Hebrew* word signifies, *a perfect and sincere man*, in opposition to his brother *Esau* who is said to be *cunning*, so that to be an *Israelite indeed*, is to be a downright honest man, without fraud and guile, without any arts of hypocrisy and deceit.

In speaking of this virtue of sincerity, which is the highest character and commendation of a good man, I shall consider it, as it respects God and man. As it respects God, so it imports the truth and sincerity of our piety and devotion towards him. As it regards men, so it signifies a simplicity of mind and manners, in our carriage and conversation, one towards another: both these are included, and very probably were intended, in the character which our Saviour here gives *Nathanael*.

I. I shall consider this grace, or virtue of sincerity, as it respects God, and so it imports the truth and sincerity of our piety towards him, that we heartily believe, and fear, and honour him, and that the outward expressions of our piety and obedience to him, are the genuine issue of our inward apprehensions of him, and affections towards him; and this no doubt, our Saviour intended, in the first place, in the character of this good man, that he was a man of a real and substantial and unaffected piety, and in truth, what he appeared to be; that he did sincerely love God and his truth, and was ready to embrace it, whenever it was fairly proposed to him, as did plainly appear in his carriage towards our Saviour; for when *Philip* invited him to *come and see him*, he did not conceal the prejudice and objection he had against him, grounded upon a common, but uncharitable proverb, that *out of Nazareth ariseth no Prophet*; but having an honest and sincere mind, he was not so carried away by a popular prejudice, as not to have patience to be better inform'd, and therefore was easily persuaded to *go and see* our Saviour, and to discourse

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

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with him himself, and being satisfied that he was the *Messias*, he presently owns him for such, calling him *the son of God, and the King of Israel*. And because sincerity is the very heart and substance of religion, it concerns us not only to endeavour after this temper and disposition, but to enquire into the nature and properties of it, that we may know when we have it, and may have the comfort of it. I shall mention *five* or *six* properties of a sincere piety, by which men may sufficiently know the integrity of their hearts towards God.

S E R M.
I.

1. Our piety is then sincere, when the chief reasons and predominant motives of it are religious; and I call *that* a religious or rational motive, which regards God and another world, in opposition to men, and to our present temporal advantages; when the principal and swaying motives of our piety, are a sense of God's authority over us, and of our duty and obligation to him; a fear of his displeasure and threatenings, and the hopes of the glorious reward which he hath promised to obedience; these motives are properly religious, because they respect God, and are the arguments to obedience, which he himself offers to us, to persuade us to our duty; and that is a sincere piety, which is wrought in us by these considerations, how unequally soever mixed; for even in the most of men, fear does many times prevail more than love, and, in case of great temptation, may preserve men from sin, when perhaps no other consideration will do it. On the contrary, that is an unsincere piety, to which we are moved merely by the regard of men, and the consideration of some temporal advantages. And when these have the chief influence upon us, it is easy for any man to discern in himself; for he that will carefully observe himself, can hardly be ignorant of the true spring and motive of his own actions: But there is one sign whereby a man may certainly know that his heart is not right towards God, and *that is*, if when these motives are absent, our piety and zeal

S E R M.

I.

for the true religion doth either cease, or is sensibly cooled and abated; as if impiety, or popery, or any thing else that is bad, begin to be in fashion, and to have the countenance of great examples; if those whom we fear, and upon whom we depend, do discover any inclination that way; if the garb of religion cease to be for our interest, or, in the revolution of things, happen to be contrary to it: If in any of these cases, we let fall the profession of our religion, or neglect the practice of it, this is a plain and undeniable demonstration of the insincerity of our former piety.

2. A sincere piety must be rooted in the heart, and be a living principle within us: for, as the Apostle reasons in another case, *he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he who is one inwardly, and in the heart*; and without this, all outward acts of piety and devotion are hypocrisy, a picture of religion, and a *form of godliness*, without the life and power of it.

3. A third evidence of a sincere piety is, when men are religious in private and in secret, as well as in publick and in the open view of men. He is truly devout, who is so in his family, and in his closet, where he hath no witnesses, but God, and his own soul, as well as in the church. He is a downright honest man, who will make good his word, and perform his promise, when no proof can be made of it, and no law compel him to it, as readily as if there had been an hundred witnesses of it. He is sincerely just, who will not detain from another his right, though he be ignorant of it; nor wrong any man, though he could do it with all the secrecy and safety in the world; who will not impose upon another's ignorance or unskilfulness, tho' never so much to his own benefit and advantage. He is truly charitable, who would not only as soon, but rather sooner give his alms in secret, than in the sight of men: And he is truly grateful, who when there is occasion and opportunity, will acknowledge a kindness and requite a benefit

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benefit to the relations of his deceased friend, though he be sure that all memory of the obligation died with him, and that none are conscious of it, but God and his own conscience. And indeed there is scarce any act of piety and virtue, the sincerity of which may not by this evidence be known by us : As on the contrary, a man may for certain conclude himself a hypocrite, if he be not the same in the presence of God, and his own conscience, that he is in the sight of men.

S E R M.

I.

4. Another evidence of a sincere piety is a constant tenour of goodness in the general course of our lives. I do not now speak of the first beginnings of piety, in new converts, which are many times very imperfect, and such as afford little or no evidence of a man's sincerity ; but in those who have made any considerable progress in goodness ; the habits of any known sin, and the wilful and deliberate neglect of our duties, and even the single acts of more heinous crimes, will bring in question our sincerity, and are by no means to be sheltered under the name of infirmity : for these the grace of God, if we be not wanting to our selves, will enable us to subdue ; and he is not sincerely good, who doth not seriously endeavour to be as good as he can, and does not make use of that grace which God is ready to afford to all the purposes, tho' not of a perfect, yet of a sincere obedience to the laws of God.

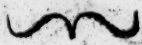
5. Another evidence of a sincere piety is, that our obedience to God be uniform and universal, equally respecting all the laws of God, and every part of our duty ; that it do not content itself with an especial regard to some precepts of the law tho' never so considerable, and allow it self in the breach, or neglect of the rest ; no nor with observing the duties of one table of the law, if it overlook the other ; no nor with obedience to all the commandments of God, one only excepted. St. James puts this case, and determines, that, *he that keeps the whole law, saving that he offends in one point, is guilty*

S E R M. *guilty of all*, that is, is not sincere in his obedience to the
 I. rest. And therefore we must take great heed that we do
 not set the commandments of God at odds, and dash
 the two tables of the law against one another, lest,
 as St. James says, we *break the whole law*: And
 yet I fear this is too common a fault, even amongst
 those who make a great profession of piety, that they
 are not sufficiently sensible of the obligation and ne-
 cessity of the duties of the second table, and of the
 excellency of those graces and virtues, which respect
 our carriage and conversation with one another. Men
 do not seem to consider, that God did not give laws
 to us, for his own sake, but ours; and therefore that
 he did not only design that we should honour him,
 but that we should be happy in one another; for
 which reason he joins with our humble and dutiful
 deportment towards himself, the offices of justice and
 charity towards others, Mic. 6. 8. *he hath shewed thee,
 O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require
 of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk
 humbly with thy God?* And 1 John 4. 21. *this com-
 mandment have we from him, that he who loveth God,
 love his brother also.* And yet it is too visible that
 many, who make a great profession of piety towards
 God, are very defective in moral duties; very un-
 peaceable, and turbulent in their spirits, very peevish
 and passionate, very conceited and censorious, as if
 their profession of godliness did exempt them from
 the care and practice of christian virtues. But we
 must not so fix our eye upon heaven, as to forget
 that we walk upon the earth, and to neglect the or-
 dering of our steps and conversation among men, lest
 while we are gazing upon the stars, we fall into the
 ditch of gross and foul immorality.

It is very possible, that men may be devout and
 zealous in religion, very nice and scrupulous about
 the worship and service of God; and yet because of
 their palpable defect in points of justice and honesty,
 of meekness and humility, of peace and charity, may be

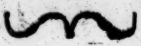
Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

7

be gross and odious hypocrites. For men must not S E R M.
think for some acts, either of outward or inward I.
piety, to compound with God for the neglect of 
mercy and judgment, or to demand it as a right from
men to be excused from the great duties and virtues
of humane conversation; or pretend to be above
them, because they relate chiefly to this world, and
to the temporal happiness of men; as if it were the
privilege of great devotion, to give a licence to men
to be peevish and froward, sour and morose, super-
cilious and censorious in their behaviour towards
others. Men must have a great care, that they be
not intent upon the outward parts of religion, to the
prejudice of inward and real goodness, and that they
do not so use the means of religion, as to neglect and
lose the main end of it: that they do not place all re-
ligion in fasting and outward mortification: For
though these things be very useful and necessary in
their place, if they be discreetly managed, and made
subservient to the great ends of religion; yet it is
often seen that men have so unequal a respect to the
several parts of their duty, that fasting and corporal
severity, those meager and lean duties of piety, in
comparison, do like *Pharaoh's lean kine, devour and*
eat up almost all the goodly and well favoured, the
great and substantial duties of the christian life; and
therefore men must take great heed, lest whilst they
are so intent upon mortifying themselves, they do not
mortify virtue and good nature, humility and meek-
ness and charity, things highly valuable in themselves,
and amiable in the eyes of men, and in the sight of
God of great price.

For the neglect of the moral duties of the second
table is not only a mighty scandal to religion, but of
pernicious consequence many other ways. A fierce
and ill governed, an ignorant and injudicious zeal
for the honour of God, and something or other be-
longing necessarily, as they think, to his true wor-
ship and service, hath made many men do many un-
reasonable,

S E R M. reasonable, immoral and impious things, of which

I.  history will furnish us with innumerable instances, in the practice of the *Jesuits*, and other zealots of the church of *Rome*; and there are not wanting too many examples of this kind amongst our selves: For men that are not sober and considerate in their religion, but give themselves up to the conduct of blind prejudice, and furious zeal, do easily persuade themselves that any thing is lawful, which they strongly fancy to tend to the honour of God, and to the advancement of the cause of religion. Hence some have proceeded to that height of absurdity, in their zeal for their religion and church, as to think it not only lawful but highly commendable and meritorious, to equivocate upon oaths, and break faith with hereticks, and to destroy all those that differ from them; as if it were piety in some cases to lie for the truth, and to kill men for God's sake.

So that if we would approve the integrity of our hearts to God, and evidence to our selves the sincerity of our obedience, we ought impartially to regard all the laws of God, and every part of our duty: and if we do not, our heart is not upright with God.

'Tis observable that sincerity in scripture is often called by the name of integrity, and perfection, because it is integrated and made up of all the parts of our duty.

6. The last evidence I shall mention of the sincerity of our religion is, if it hold out against persecution and endure the fiery trial. This is the utmost proof of our integrity, when we are called to bear the cross, to be willing then to expose all our worldly interest, and even life itself, for the cause of God and religion. This is a trial which God doth not always call his faithful servants to; but they are always to be prepared for it, in the purpose and resolution of their minds. This our Saviour makes the great mark of a true disciple, *if any man* (saith he) *will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his*
cross

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

9

cross and follow me. This is a certain sign, that men S E R M.
have *received the word into good ground*, and are well I.
rooted in their religion, when they are not shaken by 
these fierce assaults; *for many* (as our Saviour tells us)
bear the word, and with joy receive it; but having not
root in themselves, they endure but for a while, and when
persecution and tribulation ariseth, because of the word,
presently they are offended; nay some, when they see
persecution coming at a distance, wheel off and be-
think themselves of making their retreat in time, and
of *agreeing with their adversary, whilst he is yet in*
the way.

So that constancy to our religion in case of danger,
and suffering for it, is the best proof of our sincerity.
This is *the fiery trial*, as the scripture calls it, which
will try what materials we are made of, and whether
we love God and his truth in sincerity.

And thus I have considered sincerity as it respects
God, and imports true piety and religion towards
him; and I proceed to the *second* consideration,

II. Of sincerity as it regards men; and so it sig-
nifies a simplicity of mind and manners in our con-
versation, and carriage one towards another; single-
ness of heart, discovering it self in a constant plain-
ness and honest openness of behaviour, free from all
insidious devices, and little tricks, and fetches of craft
and cunning; from all false appearances and deceit-
ful disguises of our selves in word or action; or yet
more plainly, it is to speak as we think, and do what
we pretend and profess, to perform and make good
what we promise, and, in a word, really to be,
what we would seem and appear to be.

Not that we are obliged to tell every man all our
mind; but we are never to declare any thing contrary
to it: We may be silent, and conceal as much of our
selves, as prudence, or any other good reason re-
quires; but we must not put on a disguise, and make
a false appearance and empty shew of what we are
not, either by word or action. Contrary to this
virtue

S E R M. virtue is (I fear) most of that compliment which is
 I. current in conversation, and which for the most
 part is nothing but words, to fill up the gaps, and
 supply the emptiness of discourse; and a pretence to
 that kindness and esteem for persons, which either in
 truth we have not, or not to that degree which our
 expressions seem to import; which if done with de-
 sign, is that which we call flattery, a very odious
 sort of insincerity, and so much the worse, because it
 abuses men into a vain and foolish opinion of them-
 selves, and an ill grounded confidence of the kindness
 and good-will of others towards them; and so much
 the more dangerous, because it hath a party within
 us, which is ready to let it in; it plays upon our
 self-love, which greedily catcheth at any thing
 that tends to magnifie and advance us; for God
 knows, we are all too apt to think and make
 the best of our bad selves, so that very few
 tempers have wisdom and firmness enough to be
 proof against flattery; it requires great conside-
 ration and a resolute modesty and humility, to
 resist the insinuations of this serpent; yea, a little
 rudeness and moroseness of nature, a prudent distrust
 and infidelity in mankind, to make a man in good
 earnest to reject and despise it.

Now besides, that all hypocrisy and insincerity is
 mean in it self, having falshood at the bottom; it is
 also often made use of, to the prejudice of others, in
 their rights and interests. For not only dissimulation
 is contrary to sincerity, because it consists in a vain
 shew of what we are not, in a false muster of our
 virtues and good qualities, in a deceitful represen-
 tation and undue character of our lives: but there are
 likewise other qualities and actions more inconsistent
 with integrity, which are of a more injurious and mis-
 chievous consequence to our nature, as falshood and
 fraud, and perfidiousness, and infinite little crafts and
 arts of deceit, which men practise upon one another
 in

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

II

in their ordinary conversation and intercourse. The former is great vanity: But this is gross inequity. SERM.
I.

And yet these qualities dexterously managed, so as not to lie too plain and open to discovery, are looked upon by many, as signs of great depth and shrewdness, admirable instruments of business, and necessary means for the compassing our own ends and designs; and though in those that have suffered by them, and felt the mischief of them, they are always accounted dishonest, yet among the generality of lookers on, they pass for great policy; as if the very skill of governing and managing human affairs, did consist in these little tricks and devices: But he that looks more narrowly into them, and will but have the patience to observe the end of them, will find them to be great follies, and that it is only for want of true wisdom and understanding, that men *turn aside to tricks, and make dissimulation and lies their refuge*. It is Solomon's observation, that *he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but the folly of fools is deceit*. The folly of fools, that is, the most egregious piece of folly that any man can be guilty of, is to play the knave: The vulgar translation renders this clause a little otherwise, but yet towards the same sense, *sed stultus divertit ad dolos, but the fool turns aside to tricks*; to make use of these, is a sign the man wants understanding to see the plain and direct way to his end. I will not deny but these little arts may serve a present turn, and perhaps successfully enough; but true wisdom goes deep, and reacheth a great way farther, looking to the end of things, and regarding the future as well as the present, and, by judging upon the whole matter and sum of affairs, doth clearly discern that craft and cunning are only useful for the present occasion; whereas integrity is of a lasting use, and will be serviceable to us upon all occasions, and in the whole course of our lives; and that dissimulation and deceit, tho' they may do some present execution in business, yet they recoil upon

S E R M. upon a man terribly afterwards, so as to make him
 I. stagger, and by degrees to weaken, and at last to
 destroy his reputation, which is a much more useful
 and substantial and lasting instrument of prosperity
 and success in human affairs, than any tricks and de-
 vices whatsoever. Thus have I considered this great
 virtue of sincerity, both as it regards God, and the
 mutual conversation and intercourse of men one with
 another.

And now having explain'd the nature of sincerity
 to God and man, by declaring the properties of it,
 and in what instances we ought chiefly to practise it,
 and what things are contrary to it; that which re-
 mains, is to persuade men to endeavour after this ex-
 cellent quality, and to practise it in all the words and
 actions of their lives.

Let us then, in the first place, be sincere in our re-
 ligion, and serve God in truth and uprightness of
 heart, out of conscience of our duty and obligations
 to him, and not with sinister respects to our private
 interest or passion, to the publick approbation or
 censure of men. Let us never make use of religion
 to serve any base and unworthy ends, cloaking our
 designs of covetousness, or ambition, or revenge,
 with pretences of conscience and zeal for God; and
 let us endeavour after the reality of religion, always
 remembering that a sincere piety doth not consist in
 shew, but substance, not in appearance, but in effect;
 that the spirit of true religion is still and calm, charit-
 able and peaceable, making as little shew and stir as
 is possible; that a truly and sincerely good man does
 not affect vain ostentation, and an unseasonable disco-
 very of his good qualities, but endeavours rather real-
 ly to be, than to seem religious, and, of the two,
 rather seeks to conceal his piety, than to set it out
 with pomp; gives his alms privately; prays to God
 in secret, and makes no appearance of religion, but
 in such fruits and effects as cannot be hid, in the quiet
 and silent virtues of humility, and meekness, and pa-
 tience,

tience, of peace and charity, in governing his passions, and taking heed not to offend with his tongue, by slander and calumny, by envious detraction or rash censure, or by any word or action that may be to the hurt and prejudice of his neighbour: But, on the contrary, it is a very ill sign, if a man affect to make a great noise and bustle about religion; if he blow a trumpet before his good works, and by extraordinary shews of devotion summon the eyes of men to behold him, and do as it were, call aloud to them to take notice of his piety, *and to come and see his zeal for the Lord of Hosts.* It is not impossible but such a man, with all his vanity and ostentation, may have some real goodness in him; but he is *as the hypocrites are*, and does as like one as is possible; and by the mighty shew that he makes, to wise and considerate men, greatly brings in question the sincerity of his religion.

And with the sincerity of our piety towards God, let us join the simplicity and integrity of manners in our conversation with men. Let us strictly charge ourselves to use truth and plainness in all our words and doings; let our tongue be ever the true interpreter of our mind, and our expressions the lively image of our thoughts and affections, and our outward actions exactly agreeable to our inward purposes and intentions.

Amongst too many other instances of the great corruption and degeneracy of the age wherein we live, the great and general want of sincerity in conversation is none of the least. The world is grown so full of dissimulation and compliment, that mens words are hardly any signification of their thoughts; and if any man measure his words by his heart, and speak as he thinks, and do not express more kindness to every man, than men usually have for any man, he can hardly escape the censure of rudeness and want of breeding. The old *English* plainness and sincerity, that generous integrity of nature and honesty

S E R M. honesty of disposition, which always argues true greatness of mind, and is usually accompanied with undaunted courage and resolution, is in a great measure lost among us; there hath been a long endeavour to transform us into foreign manners and fashions, and to bring us to a servile imitation of none of the best of our neighbours, in some of the worst of their qualities. The dialect of conversation is now-a-days so swell'd with vanity and compliment, and so surfeited (as I may say) with expressions of kindness and respect, that if a man that lived an age or two ago, should return into the world again, he would really want a dictionary to help him to understand his own language, and to know the true intrinsic value of the phrase in fashion, and would hardly, at first, believe at what a low rate the highest strains and expressions of kindness imaginable do commonly pass in current payment; and when he could come to understand it, it would be a great while before he could bring himself, with a good countenance and a good conscience, to converse with men upon equal terms, and in their own way.

And, in truth, it is hard to say, whether it should more provoke our contempt or our pity, to hear what solemn expressions of respect and kindness will pass between men, almost upon no occasion; how great honour and esteem they will declare for one whom perhaps they never heard of or saw before, and how entirely they are all on the sudden devoted to his service and interest, for no reason; how infinitely and eternally obliged to him, for no benefit; and how extremely they will be concerned for him, yea and afflicted too, for no cause. I know it is said in justification of this hollow kind of conversation, that there is no harm, no real deceit in compliment, but the matter is well enough, so long as we understand one another; *Et verba valent ut nummi*, words are like money, and when the current value of them is generally understood, no man is cheated by them.

This

This is something, if such words were any thing; S E R M. I.
but being brought into the account, they are mere

cyphers. However, it is still a just matter of complaint, that sincerity and plainness are out of fashion, and that our language is running into a lie, that men have almost quite perverted the use of speech, and made words to signify nothing; that the greatest part of the conversation of mankind, and of their intercourse with one another, is little else but driving a trade of dissimulation; insomuch that it would make a man heartily sick and weary of the world, to see the little sincerity that is in use and practice among men, and tempt him to break out into that melancholy complaint and wish of the prophet Jer. 9. *O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: For they are all adulterers, and an assembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongue like their bow for lies, but have no courage for the truth upon earth. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanderers. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour, but in his heart he lieth in wait. Shall not I visit for these things, saith the Lord? and shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this?*

Such were the manners of the people of Israel at that time, which were both the forerunner and the cause of those terrible calamities which befel them afterwards; and this character agrees but too well to the present age, which is so wretchedly void of truth and sincerity; for which reason there is the greater need to recommend this virtue to us, which seems to be fled from us, that *truth and righteousness may return, and glory may dwell in our land, and God may shew his mercy upon us, and grant us his salvation, and righteousness and peace may kiss each other.* To this end

S E R M. end give me leave to offer these following considerations.

I.

 First, That sincerity is the highest commendation, and the very best character, that can be given of any man; it is the solid foundation of all virtue, the heart and soul of all piety and goodness; it is in scripture called *perfection*, and frequently joined with it; and throughout the bible, there is the greatest stress and weight laid upon it; it is spoken of as the sum and comprehension of all religion. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth*, says *Joshua* to the people of *Israel*, *Jos. 24. 14.* God takes great pleasure in it; so *David* assures us, *1 Chron. 29, 17.* *I know, my God, that thou tryest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness:* And again, *Thou lovest truth in the inward parts.*

To this disposition of mind the promises of divine favour and blessing are particularly made, *Psal. 15. 1, 2.* *Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth from his heart.* *Psal. 32. 2.* *Blessed is the man, unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

And 'tis observable that this character of our Saviour here given of *Nathanael*, is the only full and perfect commendation that we read was ever given by him of any particular person. He commends some particular acts of piety and virtue in others, as *St. Peter's* confession of him, the faith of the *Centurion*, and of the woman that was healed by touching the hem of his garment, the charity of the woman that cast her two mites into the treasury, and the bounty of that other devout woman who poured upon him a box of precious ointment: But here he gives the particular character of a good man, when he says of *Nathanael*, that he was an *Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.* And the Apostle mentions this quality, as the chief ingredient into the character of the best man

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

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man that ever was, our blessed Saviour *who did no sin*, S E R M.
neither was guile found in his mouth.

I.

Secondly, The rarity of this virtue is a farther commendation of it. A sincerely pious and good man, without any guile or disguise, is not a sight to be seen every day. Our Saviour in the text speaks of it, as a thing very extraordinary and of a special remark and observation, and breaks out into some kind of wonder upon the occasion, as if to see a man of perfect integrity and simplicity were an occurrence very rare and unusual, and such as calls for our more special attention and regard, *Behold*, (saith he) *an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.*

Thirdly, The want of sincerity will quite spoil the virtue and exceptance of all our piety and obedience, and certainly deprive us of the reward of it. All that we do in the service of God, all our external obedience to his laws, if not animated by sincerity, is like a sacrifice without a heart, which is an abomination to the Lord.

Fourthly, Hypocrisy and insincerity is a very vain and foolish thing; it is designed to cheat others, but is in truth a deceiving of our selves. No man would flatter or dissemble, did he believe he were seen and discovered; an open knave is a great fool, who destroys at once both his design and reputation; and this is the case of every hypocrite; all the disagreement which is between his tongue and his thoughts, his actions and his heart, is open to that eye, from which nothing can be hid; *for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he seeth all his goings; there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.*

Fifthly, Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance, and many more. If the shew of any thing be good for any thing, I am sure sincerity is better; for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? for to coun-

S E R M. terfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of
 I. some real excellency. Now the best way in the
 world for a man to seem to be any thing, is really to
 be what he would seem to be. Besides, that it is
 many times as troublesome to make good the pretence
 of a good quality, as to have it; and if a man have
 it not, it is ten to one, but he is discovered to want it,
 and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it is
 lost. There is something unnatural in painting,
 which a skilful eye will easily discern from native
 beauty and complexion.

It is hard to personate and act a part long; for
 where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always
 be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and be-
 tray her self one time or other. Therefore if any
 man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so
 indeed, and then his goodness will appear to every
 body's satisfaction; for truth is convincing, and car-
 ries its own light and evidence along with it, and will
 not only commend us to every man's conscience, but
 which is much more, to God, who searcheth and seeth
 our hearts; so that upon all accounts sincerity is true
 wisdom. Particularly as to the affairs of this world,
 integrity hath many advantages over all the fine and
 artificial ways of dissimulation and deceit; it is much
 the plainer and easier, much the safer and more secure
 way of dealing in the world; it hath less of trouble
 and difficulty, of entanglement and perplexity, of
 danger and hazard in it; it is the shortest and nearest
 way to our end, carrying us thither in a straight line,
 and will hold out and last longest. The arts of deceit
 and cunning do continually grow weaker and less ef-
 fectual and serviceable to them that use them; where-
 as integrity gains strength by use, and the more and
 longer any man practiseth it, the greater service it
 does him, by confirming his reputation, and en-
 couraging those with whom he hath to do, to repose
 the greater trust and confidence in him, which is an
 unspeakable

Of Sincerity towards God and Man.

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unspeakable advantage in the business and affairs of S E R M.
life. I.

But a dissembler must always be upon his guard, and watch himself carefully, that he do not contradict his own pretence; for he acts an unnatural part, and therefore must put a continual force and restraint upon himself. Truth always lies uppermost, and if a man do not carefully attend, he will be apt to bolt it out: whereas he that acts sincerely hath the easiest task in the world; because he follows nature, and so is put to no trouble and care about his words and actions; he needs not invent any pretences before-hand, nor make excuses afterwards, for any thing he hath said or done.

But insincerity is very troublesome to manage; a man hath so many things to attend to, so many ends to bring together, as make his life a very perplex and intricate thing. *Oportet mendacem esse memorem, A lyer had need of a good memory*, lest he contradict at one time what he said at another: but truth is always consistent with it self, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand, and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware; whereas a lye is troublesome, and sets a man's invention upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to shoar it up, and proves at last more chargable, than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation; for sincerity is firm and substantial; and there is nothing hollow and unsound in it, and because it is plain and open, fears no discovery, of which the crafty man is always in danger, and when he thinks he walks in the dark, all his pretences are so transparent, that he that runs may read them: he is the last man that finds himself to be found out, and whilst he takes it for granted that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous.

S E R M. Add to all this, that sincerity is the most compen-

I. dious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy dispatch of business; it creates confidence in those we have to deal with, saves the labour of many enquiries, and brings things to an issue in few words: It is like travelling in a plain beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey's end, than by-ways, in which men often lose themselves. In a word, whatsoever convenience may be thought to be in falshood and dissimulation, it is soon over; but the inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion, so that he is not believed when he speaks truth, nor trusted, when perhaps he means honestly: When a man hath once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast, and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falshood.

And I have often thought, that God hath in great wisdom hid from men of false and dishonest minds the wonderful advantages of truth and integrity to the prosperity even of our worldly affairs; these men are so blinded by their covetousness and ambition, that they cannot look beyond a present advantage; nor forbear to seize upon it, tho' by ways never so indirect; they cannot see so far, as to the remote consequences of a steady integrity, and the vast benefit and advantages which it will bring a man at last. Were but this sort of men wise and clear-sighted enough to discern this, they would be honest, out of very knavery, not out of any love to honesty or virtue, but with a crafty design to promote and advance more effectually their own interests; and therefore the justice of the divine providence hath hid this truest point of wisdom from their eyes, that bad men might not be upon equal terms with the just and upright, and serve their own wicked designs by honest and lawful means.

Indeed, if a man were only to deal in the world for a day, and should never have occasion to converse
more

more with mankind, never more need their good S E R M. opinion, or good word, it were then no great matter I. (speaking as to the concernments of the world) if a man spent his reputation all at once, and ventured it at one throw: But if he be to continue in the world, and would have the advantage of conversation whilst he is in it, let him make use of truth and sincerity in all his words and actions, for nothing but this will last and hold out to the end, all other arts will fail, but truth and integrity will carry a man through, and bear him out to the last.

'Tis the observation of *Solomon*, Prov. 12. 19. *The lip of truth is established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.* And the wiser any man is, the more clearly will he discern, how serviceable sincerity is to all the great ends and purposes of human life; and that man hath made a good progress, and profited much in the school of wisdom, who valueth truth and sincerity according to their worth. Every man will readily grant them to be great virtues, and arguments of a generous mind, but that there is so much of true wisdom in them, and that they really serve to profit our interest in this world, seems a great paradox to the generality of men; and yet I doubt not but it is undoubtedly true, and generally found to be so, in the experience of mankind.

Lastly, Consider that it is not worth our while to dissemble, considering the shortness and especially the uncertainty of our lives. To what purpose should we be so cunning, when our abode in this world is so short and uncertain? Why should any man by dissembling his judgment, or acting contrary to it, incur at once the displeasure of God, and the discontent of his own mind? especially if we consider, that all our dissimulation shall one day be made manifest and published on the open theatre of the world, before God, Angels and men, to our everlasting shame and confusion, all disguise and vizards shall then be pluckt off, and every man

S E R M. shall appear in his true colours. For *then the secrets of men shall be judged, and God will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Nothing is now covered, which shall not then be revealed, nor hid which shall not then be known.*

Let us then be now what we would be glad to be found in that day, when all pretences shall be examined, and the closest hypocrisy of men shall be laid open and dasht out of countenance; when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and all the hidden works of darkness shall be revealed, and all our thoughts, words, and actions shall be brought to a strict and severe tryal, and be censured, by that impartial and infallible judgment of God, which is according to truth; *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ.*

To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory now and for ever. Amen.

S E R M O N II.

The Excellency of ABRAHAM'S Faith
and Obedience.

Preached at White-hall, 1686, before the Princess Anne.

x HEB. XI. 17, 18, 19.

By Faith Abraham, when he was tryed, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son: of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

THE design of this Epistle to the Hebrews S E R M.
II.
is to recommend to them the christian religion, to which they were but newly converted, and to encourage them to constancy in the profession of it, notwithstanding the sufferings which attended it. He sets before them in this chapter several examples in the old Testament of those, who, tho' they were under a much more imperfect dispensation, yet by a stedfast belief in God and his promises, had performed such wonderful acts of obedience and self-denial.

He begins with the patriarchs before the flood; but insists chiefly upon the examples of two eminent persons of their own nation, as nearest to them, and

S E R M. most likely to prevail upon them, the examples of

II. *Abraham* and *Moses*, the one the father of their nation, the other their great law-giver, and both of them the greatest patterns of faith, and obedience, and self-denial, that the history of all former ages, from the beginning of the world, had afforded.

I shall at this time, by God's assistance, treat of the first of these, the example of *Abraham*, the constancy of whose faith, and the chearfulness of whose obedience, even in the difficultest cases, is so remarkable above all the other examples mentioned in this Chapter. For, *at the command of God he left his kindred and his country, not knowing whither he should go*; by which eminent act of obedience he declared himself to be wholly at God's disposal, and ready to follow him: But this was no tryal in comparison of that here in my text, when God commanded him *to offer up his only son*: But such was the immutable stedfastness of his faith, and the perfect submission of his obedience, that it does not appear that he made the least check at it; but out of perfect reverence and obedience to the authority of the divine command, he went about it as readily and chearfully, as if God had bid him do some small thing: *By Faith Abraham, when he was tryed, offered up Isaac.*

For the explication of which words, it will be requisite to consider *Two* things.

First, The tryal or temptation in general.

Secondly, The excellency of *Abraham's* faith and obedience upon his tryal.

First, The tryal or temptation in general: It is said, that *Abraham when he was tryed*, the word is ~~when he was~~ *being tempted*: that is, God intending to make tryal of his faith and obedience; and so it is exprest, *Gen. 22. 1.* where it is said, that *God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, take now thy son, thine only son.*

Now there are two difficulties concerning this matter. It seems contrary to Scripture, that God should tempt

Abraham's Faith and Obedience.

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tempt any man ; and contrary to reason ; because God, who knows what every man will do, needed not to make tryal of any man's faith and obedience.

First, It seems contrary to Scripture, which says, *God tempts no man* : And 'tis most true, that God tempts no man, with a design to draw him into sin ; but this doth not hinder, but he may try their faith and obedience with great difficulties, to make them the more illustrious. Thus God tempted *Abraham* ; and he permitted *Job*, and even our blessed Saviour himself to be thus tempted.

Secondly, It seems contrary to reason, that God, who knows what any man will do in any circumstances, should go to make tryal of it. But God does not try men for his own information ; but to give an illustrious proof and example to others of faith and obedience : And tho' after this tryal of *Abraham*, God says to him, *Now I know that thou lovest me, because thou hast not with-held thy son, thine only son from me* ; yet we are to understand this as spoken after the manner of men ; as God elsewhere speaks to *Abraham* concerning *Sodom* ; *I will go down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the cry which is come up unto me ; and if not, I will know.*

I proceed to the *Second* thing I proposed, the excellency of *Abraham's* Faith and Obedience upon his tryal : By *Faith* *Abraham*, when he was tried, offered up *Isaac*. God accepts of it, as if he had done it ; because he had done it in part, and was ready to have performed the rest, if God had not countermanded him.

And this act of faith and obedience in *Abraham* will appear the more illustrious, if we consider these *Three* things.

I. The firmness and steadfastness of his faith, notwithstanding the objections against it.

II. The constancy of his resolution, notwithstanding the difficulty of the thing.

III. The

S E R M.

II.



III. The reasonableness of his faith, in that he gave satisfaction to himself in so hard and perplex a case.

I. The firmness and steadfastness of his faith will appear, if we consider what objections there were in the case, enough to shake a very strong faith. There were three great objections against this command, and such as might in reason make a wise and good man doubtful whether this command were from God.

The horrid nature of the thing commanded.

The grievous scandal that might seem almost unavoidably to follow upon it.

And the horrible consequence of it, which seemed to make the former promise of God to *Abraham* void.

First, The horrid nature of the thing commanded, which was for a father to kill his own child. This must needs appear very barbarous and unnatural, and look like a sacrifice to an idol, than to the true God.

It seemed to be against the law of nature, and directly contrary to that kindness and affection which God himself had planted in the hearts of parents towards their children.

And there is no affection more natural and strong than this ; for there are many persons that would redeem the lives of their children with the hazard of their own. Now that God hath planted such an affection in nature, is an argument that it is good, and therefore it could not but seem strange, that he should command any thing contrary to it : And in this case, there were two circumstances that increased the horror of the fact ; that his son was innocent ; and that he was to slay him with his own hands.

I. That his son was innocent. It would grieve the heart of any father, to give up his son to death, tho' he were never so undutiful and disobedient.

So passionately was *David* affected with the death of his son *Absalom*, as to wish he had died for him, tho' he died in the very act of rebellion, and tho' the saving of his life had been inconsistent with the peace of his government.

How

How deep then must it sink into the heart of a father, to give up his innocent son to death? and such a son was *Isaac*, for any thing that appeared to the contrary. God himself gave him this testimony, that he was *the son whom his father loved*, and there is no intimation of any thing to the contrary. Now this could not but appear strange to a good man, that God should command an innocent person to be put to death. But,

2. That a father should be commanded, not only to give up his son to death, but to slay him with his own hands; not only to be a spectator, but to be the actor in this tragedy. What father would not shrink, and start back at such a command? What good man, especially in such a case, and where nature was so hard prest, would not have been apt to have looked upon such a revelation as this, rather as the suggestion and illusion of an evil spirit, than a command of God? And yet *Abraham's* faith was not staggered, so as to call this revelation of God in question.

Secondly, The grievous scandal that might seem almost unavoidably to follow upon it, was another great objection against it. The report of such an action would in all appearance blemish the reputation, even of so good a man, amongst all sober and considerate persons, who could hardly forbear to censure him, as a wicked and unnatural man.

And this was a hard case, for a man to be put to sacrifice at once two of the dearest things in the world, his reputation and his son: Nor could he have easily defended himself from this imputation, by alledging an express revelation and command of God for it; for who would give credit to it?

A revelation to another man is nothing to me, unless I be assured, that he had such a revelation, which I cannot be, but either by another immediate revelation, or by some miracle to confirm it.

The act had an appearance of so much horror, that it was not easily credible that God should command

SERMON. mand it; and if every man's confident pretence to
 II. revelation be admitted, the worst actions may plead
 this in their excuse. So that this pretence would have
 been so far from excusing his fault, that it must rather
 have been esteemed an high aggravation of it, by
 adding the boldest impiety to the most barbarous in-
 humanity.

But *Abraham* was not stumbled at this, nor at the
 advantage which the enemies of his religion would
 make of such an occasion, who would be ready to
 say, *here is your excellent good man, and likely to be a
 friend of God, who was so cruel an enemy to his own
 son!* All this, 'tis probable, he might consider; But
 it did not move him being resolved to obey God, and
 to leave it to his wisdom to provide against all the in-
 conveniences that might follow upon it.

Thirdly, The strongest objection of all was the
 horrible consequence of the thing, which seemed to
 clash with former revelations, and to make void the
 promise which God had before made to *Abraham*,
that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed,
 which promise was expressly limited to *Isaac* and his
 posterity, who had then no son.

And of this difficulty the Apostle takes express no-
 tice in the text, that *he that had received the promises*,
 (that is, was persuaded of the truth and faithfulness of
 them) *offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was
 said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

And this objection is really so strong, that if *Abra-
 ham* could not have given himself satisfaction about
 it, he might justly have questioned the truth of the
 revelation. For no man can possibly entertain two
 contradictory revelations as from God, but he must
 of necessity question one or both of them: But so
 strong was *Abraham's* faith, as not to be shaken by
 the seeming contradiction of these two revelations.

II. We will consider the constancy of his resoluti-
 on to obey God, notwithstanding the harshness and
 difficulty

difficulty of the thing. Tho' *Abraham* were firmly S E R M.
II.
persuaded, that this command to kill his son was really from God ; yet it is no easy matter for a man to bring himself to obey God in so difficult a case, and out of mere reverence to the divine authority, to divest himself of his nature, and to thwart the strongest inclinations of it ; a man would be very apt to confer with flesh and blood in such a case. Let but any man that knows what it is to be a father, lay his hand upon his heart, and consider his own bowels ; and he will be astonished at *Abraham's* obedience as well as his faith.

To take *his son, his only son, his son whom he loved*, and in whom he placed all his hopes of a happy posterity, and with his own hands to destroy him and all his hopes together ! It must be a strong faith, that will engage a man to obedience in so difficult an instance.

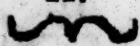
There is one circumstance more especially, which renders *Abraham's* obedience very remarkable ; the deliberateness of the action. It had not been so much, if so soon as he had received this command from God, he had upon a sudden impulse and transport of zeal done this.

But that his obedience might be the more glorious, and have all the circumstances of advantage given to it, God would have it done deliberately, and upon full consideration ; and therefore he bad him go to the mountain three days journey from the place where he was, and there to offer up his son.

It is in acts of virtue and obedience, as in acts of sin and vice ; the more deliberate the sin is, and the more calm and sedate temper the man is in when he commits it, the greater is the fault ; whereas, what is done by surprize, in the heat of temptation, or transport of passion, hath some excuse from the suddenness and undeliberateness of it.

So it is in acts of virtue and obedience, especially if they be attended with considerable difficulty, the
more

S E R M. more deliberately they are done, the more virtuous they are, and the greater praise is due to them.

II.  Now, that *Abraham's* obedience might want nothing to heighten it, God seems on purpose to have put so long a space betwixt the command and the performance of it; he gives him time to cool upon it, to weigh the command, and to look on every side of this difficult duty; he gives scope for his reason to argue, and debate the case, and opportunity for natural affection to play its part, and for flesh and blood to raise all its batteries against the resolution which he had taken up.

And now we may easily imagine, what conflict this good man had within himself, during those three days that he was travelling to the mountain in *Moriab*; and how his heart was ready to be rent in pieces, betwixt his duty to God, and his affection to his child; so that every step of this unwelcome and wearisome journey, he did, as it were, lay violent hands upon himself.

He was to offer up his son but once; but he sacrificed himself and his own will every moment for three days together; and when he came thither, and all things were ready, the altar, the wood, and the fire, and the knife, it must needs be a stabbing question, and wound him to the heart, which his innocent son so innocently askt him, *where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?*

It must be a strong faith indeed, and a mighty resolution, that could make him to hold out three days against the violent assaults of his own nature, and the charming presence of his son, enough to melt his heart, as often as he cast his eyes upon him: And yet nothing of all this made him to stagger in his duty, but *being strong in faith, he gave glory to God*, by one of the most miraculous acts of obedience that ever was exacted from any of the sons of men.

III. In the *third* and last place, I come to consider the reasonableness of his faith, in that he was able to give satisfaction

Abraham's Faith and Obedience.

91

satisfaction to himself in so intricate and perplex a S E R M.
case. The constancy of *Abraham's* faith, was not II.
an obstinate and stubborn persuasion, but the result of the wisest reasoning, and soberest consideration. 

So the text says, that *he counted*, the word is λογισάμενος, *he reasoned with himself, that God was able to raise him up from the dead*; so that he debated the matter with himself, and gave himself satisfaction, concerning the objections and difficulties in the case; and being fully satisfied that it was a divine command, he resolved to obey it.

As for the *objections* I have mentioned :

1. The horrid appearance of the thing, that a father should slay his innocent son. Why should *Abraham* scruple the doing this, at the command of God, who being the author of life, hath power over it, and may resume what he hath given, and take away the life of any of his creatures when he will, and make whom he pleaseth instruments in the execution of his command?

It was indeed a hard case, considering natural affection; and therefore God did not permit it to be executed.

But the question of God's right over the lives of men; and of his authority to command any man to be the instrument of his pleasure in such a case, admits of no dispute.

And tho' God hath planted strong affections in parents towards their children; yet he hath written no law in any man's heart to the prejudice of his own sovereign right. This is a case always excepted, and this takes away the objection of injustice.

2. As to the scandal of it, *that* could be no great objection in those times, when the absolute power of parents over their children was in its full force, and they might put them to death without being accountable for it. So that then it was no such startling matter to hear of a father putting his child to death. Nay, in much later times we find, that in the most
3 ancient

S E R M. ancient laws of the *Romans*, (I mean those of the
 II. XII tables) children are absolutely put in the power
 of their parents, to whom is given, *jus vitæ & necis*, a power of life and death over them; and likewise to sell them for slaves.

And tho' amongst the *Jews* this paternal power was limited by the law of *Moses*; and the judgment of life and death was taken out of the father's hands, except in case of contumacy and rebellion; (and even in that case the process was to be before the elders of the city) yet it is certain, that in elder times the paternal power was more absolute and unaccountable, which takes off much from the horror and scandal of the thing, as it appears now to us who have no such power.

And therefore we do not find in the history, that this objection did much stick with *Abraham*; it being then no unusual thing for a father to put his child to death upon a just account.

And the command of God, who hath absolute dominion over the lives of his creatures, is certainly a just reason; and no man can reasonably scruple the doing of that, upon the command of God, which he might have done by his own authority, without being accountable for the action, to any but God only.

3. As to the objection from the horrible consequence of the thing commanded, that the slaying of *Isaac* seemed to overthrow the promise which God had made before to *Abraham*, That in *Isaac* his seed should be called: This seems to him to be the great difficulty, and here he makes use of reason, to reconcile the seeming contradiction of this command of God, to his former promise. So the text tells us, that he offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in *Isaac* shall thy seed be called; reasoning that God was able to raise him up from the dead. So that; tho' *Isaac* were put to death, yet he saw, how the promise of God might still be made good by his being

ing raised from the dead, and living afterwards to S E R M.
have a numerous posterity. II.

There had then indeed been no instance, or example of any such thing in the world, as the resurrection of one from the dead, which makes *Abraham's* faith the more wonderful: But he confirmed himself in this belief, by an example as near the case as might be; *he reasoned, that God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence also he had received him in a figure.*

This, I know, is by interpreters generally understood of *Isaac's* being delivered from the jaws of death, when he was laid upon the altar, and ready to be slain. But the text seems not to speak of what happened after; but of something that had passed before, by which *Abraham* confirmed himself in this persuasion, that if he were slain, God would raise him up again.

And so the words *ὅθεν ἐκείνου* ought to be rendred, in the past time, *from whence also he had received him in a figure.* So that this expression plainly refers to the miraculous birth of *Isaac*, when his parents were past the age of having children; which was little less than a resurrection from the dead.

And so the scripture speaks of it, *Rom. 4. 17.* *Abraham believed God, who quickened the dead, and calleth the things which are not, as if they were; and not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body which was dead; (and a little before the text, speaking of the miraculous birth of Isaac) and therefore sprang there of one, and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of heaven.*

From whence (as the Apostle tells us) *Abraham* reasoned thus; that God who gave him *Isaac* at first in so miraculous a manner, was able by another miracle to restore him to life again, after he was dead, and to make him the father of many nations. *He reasoned that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence also he had received him in a figure.*

S E R M. Thus you see the reasonableness of *Abraham's* faith ;
 II. he pitched upon the main difficulty in the case, and
 he answered it, as well as was possible: And in his reasoning about this matter he gives the utmost weight to every thing that might tend to vindicate the truth and faithfulness of God's promise, and to make the revelations of God consistent with one another ; and this, tho' he had a great interest and a very tender concernment of his own, to have biased him.

For he might have argued with great appearance and probability the other way : But as every pious and good man should do, he reasoned on God's side, and favoured that part. Rather than disobey a command of God, or believe, that his promise should be frustrate, he will believe any thing that is credible and possible, how improbable soever. Thus far faith will go ; but no farther. From the believing of plain contradictions and impossibilities, it always desires to be excused.

Thus much for explication of the words ; which I hope hath not been altogether unprofitable, because it tends to clear a point which hath something of difficulty and obscurity in it, and to vindicate the holy Scripture, and the divine revelation therein contained, from one of the most specious objections of infidelity.

But I had a farther design in this text ; and that is to make some *observations* and *inferences* from it, that may be of use to us. As,

First, That human nature is capable of clear and full satisfaction, concerning a divine revelation. For if *Abraham* had not been fully and past all doubt assured that this was a command from God, he would certainly have spared his son. And nothing is more reasonable, than to believe, that those, to whom God is pleased to make immediate revelations of his will, are some way or other assured that they are divine ; otherwise they would be in vain, and to no purpose.

But

But how men are assured concerning divine revelations made to them, is not so easy to make out to others; only these two things we are sure of. S E R M.
II.

1. That God can work in the mind of man a firm persuasion of the truth of what he reveals, and that such a revelation is from him. This no man can doubt of, that considers the great power and influence, which God, who made us, and perfectly knows our frame, must needs have upon our minds and understandings.

2. That God never offers any thing to any man's belief, that plainly contradicts the natural and essential notions of his mind; because this would be for God to destroy his own workmanship, and to impose that upon the understanding of man, which whilst it remains what it is, it cannot possibly admit.

For instance, we cannot imagine, that God should reveal to any man any thing that plainly contradicts the essential perfections of the divine nature; for such a revelation can no more be supposed to be from God, than a revelation from God, that there is no God; which is a downright contradiction.

Now to apply this to the revelation which God made to *Abraham*, concerning the sacrificing his son: This was made to him by an audible voice, and he was fully satisfied by the evidence which it carried along with it, that it was from God.

For this was not the first of many revelations that had been made to him, so that he knew the manner of them, and had found by manifold experience, that he was not deceived, and upon this experience was grown to a great confidence in the truth and goodness of God. And it is very probable, the first time God appeared to *Abraham*, because it was a new thing, that to make way for the credit of future revelations, God did shew himself to him in so glorious a manner, as was abundantly to his conviction.

And this St. *Stephen* does seem to intimate, *Acts* 7. 2. *The God of Glory appeared to our father Abraham*

S E R M. *when he was in Mesopotamia.* Now by this glorious

II. appearance of God to him at first, he was so prepared for the entertainment of after-revelations, that he was not staggered even at this, concerning the sacrificing of his son, being both by the manner of it, and the assurance that accompanied it, fully satisfied, that it was from God.

Secondly, I observe from hence the great and necessary use of reason in matters of faith. For we see here, that *Abraham's* reason was a mighty strengthening and help to his faith. Here were two revelations made to *Abraham*, which seemed to clash with one another; and if *Abraham's* reason could not have reconciled the repugnancy of them, he could not possibly have believed them both to be from God; because this natural notion or principle, that *God cannot contradict himself*, every man does first, and more firmly believe, than any revelation whatsoever.

Now *Abraham's* reason relieved him in this strait. So the text expressly tells us, *he reasoned with himself, that God was able to raise him from the dead.*

And this being admitted, the command of God, concerning the slaying of *Isaac*, was very well consistent with his former promise, That in *Isaac* his seed should be called.

I know, there hath a very rude clamour been raised by some persons, (but of more zeal, I think, than judgment) against the use of reason in matters of faith: But how very unreasonable this is, will appear to any one that will but have patience to consider these following particulars.

I. The nature of divine revelation; that it doth not endow men with new faculties, but propoundeth new objects to the faculties, which they had before. Reason is the faculty whereby revelation is to be discerned; for when God reveals any thing to us, he reveals it to our understanding, and by that we are to judge of it. Therefore *St. John* cautions us, *1 John 4. 1.*

Not

Not to believe every spirit ; but to try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world ; that is, there are many that falsely pretend to inspiration : But how can these pretenders be tryed and discerned from those that are truly inspired, but by using our reason, in comparing the evidence for the one and the other ?

2. This will farther appear, if we consider the nature of faith. Faith (as we are now speaking of it) is an assent of the mind to something as revealed by God : Now all assent must be grounded upon evidence ; that is, no man can believe any thing, unless he have or thinks he hath some reason to do so. For to be confident of a thing without reason, is not faith ; but a presumptuous persuasion and obstinacy of mind.

3. This will yet be more evident, if we consider the method, that must of necessity be used to convince any man of the truth of religion. Suppose we had to deal with one that is a stranger and enemy to Christianity, what means are proper to be used to gain him over to it ? The most natural method surely were this, to acquaint him with the holy Scriptures, which are the rule of our faith and practice. He would ask us, *Why we believe that book ?* The proper answer would be, *Because it is the word of God ;* this he could not but acknowledge to be a very good reason, if it were true : But then he would ask, *Why we believed it to be the word of God, rather than Mahomet's Alchoran, which pretends no less to be of divine inspiration ?*

If any man now should answer, that *he could give no reason, why he believed it to be the word of God, only he believed it to be so, and so every man else ought to do without enquiring after any farther reason, because reason, is to be laid aside in matters of faith ;* would not the man presently reply, *that he had just as much reason as this comes to, to believe the Alchoran, or any thing else ; that is, none at all ?*

S E R M.

II.



But certainly the better way would be to satisfy this man's reason by proper arguments that the Scriptures are as divine revelation, and that no other book in the world, can with equal reason pretend to be so: And if this be a good way, then we do and must call in the assistance of reason for the proof of our religion.

4. Let it be considered farther, that the highest commendations that are given in scripture to any one's faith are given upon account of the reasonableness of it, *Abraham's* faith is famous, and made a pattern to all generations, because he reasoned himself into it, notwithstanding the objections to the contrary, and he did not blindly break thro' these objections, and wink hard at them; but he looked them in the face, and gave himself reasonable satisfaction concerning them.

The *Centurion's* faith is commended by our Saviour, *Matth. 8. 9.* because when his servant was sick, he did not desire him to come to his house, but to *speak the word only, and his servant should be healed:* For he reasoned thus, *I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doth it,* Now if he, that was himself under authority, could thus command those that were under him; much more could he that had a divine power and commission, do what he pleased by his word. And our Saviour is so far from reprehending him for reasoning himself into this belief, that he admires his faith so much the more for the reasonableness of it, *v. 10. When Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed him, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.*

In like manner our Saviour commends the woman of *Canaan's* faith, because she enforced it so reasonably. *Mathew 15. 22.* She sued him to help her daughter; *but he answered her not a word;* and when his disciples could not prevail with him to mind her, yet still she pressed him, *saying, Lord help me;* and when

when he repulsed her with this severe answer, *It is* SERM. *not meet to take the childrens meat and cast it to dogs ;* II. she made this quick and modest reply, *Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* She acknowledgeth her own unworthiness ; but yet believes his goodness to be such, that he will not utterly reject those who humbly seek to him ; upon which he gives her this testimony, *O woman, great is thy faith !*

The Apostles were divinely inspired ; and yet the *Bereans* are commended, because they enquired and satisfied themselves in the reasons of their belief, before they assented to the doctrine which was delivered to them, even by teachers that certainly were infallible.

5. None are reprov'd in Scripture for their unbelief, but where sufficient reason and evidence was offered to them. The *Israelites* were generally blamed for their infidelity ; but then it was after such mighty wonders had been wrought for their conviction.

The *Jews* in our Saviour's time are not condemned simply for their unbelief ; but for not believing when there was such clear evidence offered to them. So our Saviour himself says, *If I had not done amongst them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin.*

Thomas indeed is blamed for the perverseness of his unbelief, because he would believe nothing but what he himself saw.

Lastly, to shew this yet more plainly, let us consider the great inconvenience and absurdity of declining the use of reason in matters of religion. There can be no greater prejudice to religion, than to decline this trial.

To say, we have no reason for our religion, is to say, it is unreasonable. Indeed it is reason enough for any article of our faith, that God hath revealed it ; because this is one of the strongest and most cogent

SERM. reasons for the belief of any thing. But when we say,

II. God hath revealed any thing, we must be ready to prove it, or else we say nothing. If we turn off reason here, we level the best religion in the world with the wildest and most absurd enthusiasms.

And it does not alter the case much, to give reason ill names, to call it *blind*, and *carnal reason*. Our best reason is but very short and imperfect: But since it is no better, we must make use of it as it is, and make the best of it.

Before I pass from this argument, I cannot but observe that both the extremes of those who differ from our church, are generally great declaimers against the use of reason in matters of faith. If they find *their* account in it, 'tis well; for our parts we apprehend no manner of inconvenience, in having reason on our side; nor need we to desire a better evidence, that any man is in the wrong, than to hear him declare against reason, and thereby to acknowledge that reason is against him. Men may vilifie reason as much as they please; and tho' *being reviled she reviles not again*, yet in a more still and gentle way, she commonly hath her full revenge upon all those that rail at her.

I have often wondered that people can with patience endure to hear their teachers and guides talk against reason; and not only so, but they pay them the greater submission and veneration for it. One would think this but an odd way to gain authority over the minds of men: But some skilful and designing men have found by experience, that it is a very good way to recommend them to the ignorant; as nurses use to endear themselves to children, by perpetual noise and nonsense.

Thirdly, I observe that God obligeth no man to believe plain and evident contradictions as matters of faith. *Abraham* could not reasonably have believed this second revelation to have been from God, if he had not found some way to reconcile it with the first.

For

For tho' a man were never so much disposed to sub-
mit his reason to divine revelation; yet it is not
possible for any man to believe God against God
himself. S E R M. II.

Some men seem to think, that they oblige God mightily, by believing plain contradictions. But the matter is quite otherwise. He that made man a *reasonable* creature, cannot take it kindly from any man to debase his workmanship, by making himself *unreasonable*. And therefore, as no service, or obedience; so no faith is acceptable unto God, but what is reasonable: If it be not so, it may be confidence or presumption; but it is not faith. For he that can believe plain contradictions, may believe any thing how absurd soever; because nothing can be more absurd, than the belief of a plain contradiction; and he that can believe any thing, believes nothing upon good grounds, because to him truth and falshood are all one.

Fourthly, I observe, that the great cause of the defect of mens obedience is the weakness of their faith. Did we believe the commands of God in the Gospel, and his promises and threatnings, as firmly as *Abraham* believed God in this case; what should we not be ready to do, or suffer, in obedience to him?

If our faith were but as strong and vigorous as his was, the effects of it would be as great and conspicuous. Were we verily persuaded, that all the precepts of our religion are the express laws of God, and that all the promises and threatnings of the Gospel will one day be verified and made good; *what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness?* How would the lively thoughts of another world, raise us above the vanities of this present life; and set us out of the reach of the most powerful temptations that this world can assault us withal; and make us to do all things with regard to eternity, and to that solemn and dreadful account
which

SERMON. which we must one day make to God the judge
II. of all?

 It is nothing but the want of a firm and steady belief of these things that makes our devotion so dead and heartless, and our resolutions of doing better so weak and inconstant. This it is that makes us so easy a prey to every temptation; and the things of this world to look so much bigger than they are, the enjoyments of it more tempting, and the evils of it more terrible than in truth they are; and in all disputes betwixt our conscience and our interest, this makes us hold the balance so unequally, and to put our foot upon the lighter scale, that it may seem to weigh down the other.

In a word, in proportion to the strength or weakness of our faith, our obedience to God will be more or less constant, uniform and perfect; because faith is the great source and spring of all the virtues of a good life,

Fifthly, We have great reason to submit to the ordinary strokes of God's providence upon ourselves, or near relations, or any thing that is dear to us. Most of the ~~are~~ are easy, compared with *Abraham's* case; it requires a prodigious strength of faith to perform so miraculous an act of obedience.

Sixthly, and lastly, We are utterly inexcusable, if we disobey the easy precepts of the Gospel. *The yoke of Christ is easy, and his burthen light*, in comparison of God's former dispensations. This was a grievous commandment which God gave to *Abraham*, to sacrifice his only son: It was a hard saying indeed; and which of us could have been able to bear it?

But if God think fit to call us to the more difficult duties of self-denial, and suffering for his truth and righteousness sake, we must, after the example of faithful *Abraham*, not think much to deny, or part with any thing for him, no not life itself. But even this,

this, which is the hardest part of religion, is easier S E R M.
than what God put upon *Abraham*. II.

For it doth not offer near the violence to nature, to lay down our life in a good cause, as it would do to put a child to death with our own hands. Besides the consideration of the extraordinary comfort and support, and the glorious rewards that are expressly promised to our obedience and self-denial in such a case; encouragement enough to make a very difficult duty easy.

And whilst I am persuading you and myself to resolution and constancy in our holy religion, notwithstanding all hazards and hardships that may attend it, I have a just sense of the frailty of human nature, and of human resolution: But withal, a most firm persuasion of the goodness of God, that *he will not suffer* those who sincerely love him and his truth, *to be tempted above what they are able*.

I will add but one consideration more, to shew the difference betwixt *Abraham's* case and ours. God commanded him to do the hardest thing in the world, to sacrifice his only son; but he hath given us an easy commandment; and that he might effectually oblige us to our duty, he hath done that for us which he required *Abraham* to do for him; *he hath not spared his own son, his only son; but hath given him up to death for us all: And hereby we know, that he loveth us, that he hath given his son for us*.

What God required of *Abraham*, he did not intend should be executed; but one great design of it was to be a type and figure of that immense love and kindness which he intended to all mankind in the sacrifice of his son, as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

And as the most clear and express promise of the *Messias* was made to *Abraham*; so the most express and lively type of the *Messias* that we meet with in all
the

S E R M. the Old Testament, was *Abraham's* offering up his son.

II. And as St. *Hierom* tells us (from an ancient and constant tradition of the *Jews*) the mountain in *Moriab*, where *Abraham* was commanded to sacrifice *Isaac*, was mount *Calvary*, where our Lord also was crucified and offered up, *that by this one sacrifice of himself once offered, he might perfect for ever them that are sanctified, and obtain eternal redemption for us.*

Now to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb that was slain; to God even our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead; to the Prince of the kings of the earth; to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; to him be glory, and honour, thanksgiving and power, now and for ever, Amen.

SERMON

S E R M O N III.

Moses's Choice of afflicted Piety,
rather than a Kingdom.

Preached at WHITE-HALL, 1687. before
the Princess ANNE.

X H E B. II. 24, 25.

*By Faith Moses when he was come to years,
refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's
daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction
with the people of God, than to enjoy the
pleasures of sin for a season.*

THE text sets before us a great pattern of self-denial: for our better understanding whereof I will give a brief account of the history of *Moses*, to which our Apostle in this passage doth refer. S E R M. III.

When *Moses* was born, his parents (for fear of the cruel law which *Pharaoh* had made, *that all the male children of the Hebrews, so soon as they were born, should be put to death*) after they had hid him three months, did at last expose him in an ark of bulrushes upon the river *Nile*, and committed him to the providence of God, whom they despaired to conceal any longer by their own care.

Pharaoh's daughter, coming by the river side, espied him, and had compassion on him; and guessing him to be one of the *Hebrew* children, called for an *Hebrew*

SER M. *Hebrew* nurse, to take care of him, who, as the providence of God had ordered it, proved to be the child's own mother. As he grew up, *Pharaoh's* daughter took care of his education in all princely qualities, and adopted him for her son; and *Pharaoh* (as *Josephus* tells us) being without son, designed him heir of his kingdom.

Moses refused this great offer. But why did he refuse it, when it seemed to be presented to him by the providence of God, and was brought about in so strange a manner; and when by this means he might probably have had it in his power to have eased the *Israelites* of their cruel bondage, and perhaps have had the opportunity of reducing that great kingdom from the worship of idols to the true God? Why would he refuse a kingdom which was offered to him with so fair an opportunity of doing so much good?

That which seems to have prevailed with *Moses*, was this, that he could not accept the offer without forsaking God, and renouncing his religion; for considering how strangely the *Egyptians* were addicted to idolatry, he could never hope to be accepted for heir of that kingdom, unless he would violate his conscience, either by abandoning or dissembling his religion.

And how unlikely it was, that he should prevail with them to change their religion, he might easily judge by the example of *Joseph*, who, tho' he had so much authority and esteem amongst them, by having been so great a benefactor to their nation; yet he could never move them in the least in that matter.

Now seeing he had no hopes of attaining, or enjoying that dignity, without sinning grievously against God, he would not purchase a kingdom at so unconscionable a price. And as for the deliverance of his people, he was content to trust the providence and promise of God for that; and in the mean time was resolved rather to take a part in the afflictions

of God's people, *than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for* S E R M,
a season. III.

From the words thus explained, I shall take occasion to consider these *four* things.

I. *Moses's* self-denial, in preferring and chusing a state of afflicted piety, before any sinful enjoyments whatsoever, before the greatest earthly happiness and prosperity, when it was not to be attained and enjoyed upon other terms than of sinning against God.

II. I shall consider those circumstances of this self-denial of *Moses*, which do very much commend and set off the virtue of it.

III. The prudence and reasonableness of this choice, in preferring a state of afflicted piety and virtue, before the greatest prosperity and pleasure of a sinful course.

IV. Supposing this choice to be reasonable, I shall enquire how it comes to pass, that so many make another choice.

I. We will consider *Moses* his self-denial, in preferring a state of afflicted piety before the greatest earthly happiness and prosperity, when it is not to be enjoyed upon other terms, than of sinning against God. He was adopted heir of the kingdom of *Egypt*, (one of the greatest and most flourishing kingdoms then in the world;) but he could not hope to attain to this dignity, and to secure himself in the possession of it, upon other terms, than of complying with that nation, in their idolatrous religion and worship.

Now being brought up in the belief of the true God, the God of *Israel*, by his mother, to whom *Pharaoh's* daughter had committed him, he could not, without great violence to his conscience, and the principles of his education, renounce the true God, and fall off to the idolatry of the *Egyptians*: And for this reason *he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the worshippers of the true God*, than to have the temporary

S E R M. porary enjoyment of any thing that was not to
 III. be had without sin; for so the word ought to be
 render'd, ἢ προσωκαυρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας δόλου, *than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin.* So here was *Moses* his self-denial, that he chose rather to suffer affliction with the worshippers of the true God, than to gain a kingdom, by the renouncing of God and religion.

II. We will consider those circumstances of his self-denial, which do very much commend and set off the virtue of it.

1. What it was he refused to be called; *the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; that is, to be heir of one of the greatest and most flourishing kingdoms in the world: A temptation so great, that the devil himself could not find out one much greater, when he set upon the son of God to tempt him to fall down and worship him.

And when we consider for what inconsiderable things some men sell their religion and their consciences, we shall think it no small temptation which *Moses* here resisted. *Si violandum est jus, regnandi causâ violandum est; If a man would do any unjust thing, and violate his religion and conscience, he would not do it for less than a kingdom;* and it would be a very hard bargain, even upon those terms.

2. Consider not only what he refused, but what he chose in the place of it; a state of great affliction and suffering. Had he refused a kingdom, and chosen the quiet condition of a subject of middle rank, (beneath envy and above contempt) his self-denial had not been so great; nay, perhaps he had made a wise choice, in the account of the wisest men, in preferring a plentiful and quiet retirement, before the cares of a crown, and the burthen of publick government.

But it is very rare to find a man that would chuse rather to be oppress'd and persecuted, than to be a prince,

prince, and to have the sweet power to use others as S E R M.
he pleased. III.

3. Consider how fair a prospect he had of enjoying this kingdom, if he could but have come up to the terms of it. He did not reject it, because he despaired of attaining it: For he had all the right that a good title could give him, being adopted heir to it; and yet he refused it.

To which I may add, that his breeding was such as might easily kindle ambitious thoughts in him. He was brought up in *Pharaoh's* court, and was the darling and favourite of it; exceeding beautiful (as *Josephus* tells us) and *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*; than which, no two qualities are more apt to puff up and swell a man with big thoughts of himself.

They that are bred in a low condition, never think of a kingdom; men not being apt to aspire to things which are remote, and at a great distance from them.

But nothing is more rare in persons of great and generous minds, than such a self-denial as this.

Let it be considered, in the last place, that this was a deliberate choice, not any rash and sudden determination made by him when he was of incompetent age to make a true judgment of things. And this the Apostle takes notice of in the text, as a very memorable circumstance, that *when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*. And St. Stephen tells us, that he was *full forty years old* when he made this choice, *Acts 7. 23*. *When he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel*. When he was of ripest judgment, and in the height of his prosperity and reputation, he made this choice; for it is said in the verse before, that *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in word and deed*; that is, he was in great reputation for his wisdom and valour.

Moses's Choice of afflicted Piety,

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This seems to refer to other passages of his life, which are not recorded in the Scripture history, but related at large by *Josephus*, out of historians extant in his time. For he tells, that when the *Ethiopians* had invaded *Egypt*, and almost over-run it, *Pharaoh* was directed by the Oracle at *Memphis*, to make *Moses* his General, who, by his extraordinary conduct and courage overthrew the *Ethiopians*, and drove them out of *Egypt*.

This *Moses* did not think fit to relate of himself; but St. *Stephen* seems to allude to it, when he says, that *he was mighty in word and deed*: And then it follows; and when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of *Israel*; that is, when he was at full maturity of judgment, and in the height of his prosperity and reputation, he quitted the court of *Egypt*, and went to visit his afflicted brethren, and chose rather to take part with them in their sufferings, than to accept those great offers that were made to him.

There is likewise another passage in *Josephus* concerning *Moses*, which seems to be a fore-runner of the contempt which he shewed afterwards of the crown of *Egypt*; That when *Moses* was about three years old, *Thermusis*, the daughter of *Pharaoh*, brought the child to him, who took him in his arms, and put his diadem upon his head; but *Moses* took it off, and cast it to the ground, and trampled it under his feet. This was but a childish act, and they who saw it, would easily believe, that, for all his childish contempt of it then, if it were put upon his head in good earnest, when he came to be a man, he would hold it on faster, and use it with more respect.

And it is not improbable, but that the Apostle might have some regard to this, when he says, that *Moses* when he came to years; intimating, that he did not only trample upon the diadem of *Pharaoh*, when he was a child; but when he was come to years, and was

rather than a Kingdom.

S E R M,
III.

was capable of judging better of those things, *he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

But before I proceed any farther, I cannot but take notice of an objection, which may seem to reflect greatly upon the integrity of *Moses*. Can we think him so very conscientious a man, who persuaded the people of *Israel*, and pretended God's direction in the case, to cheat the *Egyptians* of their jewels, under a fraudulent pretence of borrowing them? There is some difficulty in the thing, as at first sight it appears: And yet I doubt not, with your favourable attention, and free from prejudice, to vindicate *Moses* clearly in this matter.

And I shall not insist upon that which is commonly and truly said in this case; that God, who is the supreme Lord of all things, may transfer the rights of men from one to another: Because the objection doth not lie against God's right to take away from any man what he hath given him; but against the fraudulent manner of doing it, which seems unworthy of God to command or encourage.

Now this matter, I think, is capable of another and much clearer answer; which, in short is this, and grounded upon the history, as we find it related, *Exod. 12.* The providence of God did, it seems, design by this way to make some reparation to the *Israelites*, for the tyrannical usage which they had received from the *Egyptians*; and that first (as the text expressly tells us) *in giving them favour with the Egyptians*; who, in truth, for their own ends, and to get rid of such troublesome guests, were disposed to lend them any thing they had.

Thus far all is right; here is nothing but fair borrowing and lending: And if the *Israelites* acquired a right to those things afterwards, there was then no obligation to restitution.

Let us see then how the providence of God brought this about: Namely, by permitting the *Egyptians* afterwards, without cause, and after leave given them

S E R M. to depart, to pursue them, with a design to have destroyed them; by which hostility and perfidiousness they plainly forfeited their right to what they had only lent before. For this hostile attempt, which would have warranted the *Israelites* to have spoiled them of their jewels, if they had been in the possession of the *Egyptians*, did certainly warrant them to keep them when they had them; and by this means they became rightful possessors of what they had only by loan before, and could not have detained without fraud and injustice, if this hostility of the *Egyptians* had not given them a new title and clear right to them.

But I proceed to the *third* thing I proposed, which was to vindicate the prudence and reasonableness of this choice. And in speaking to this, I shall abstract from the particular case of *Moses*, and shew in general, that it is a prudent and reasonable thing, to prefer even an afflicted state of piety and virtue, before the greatest pleasures and prosperity of a sinful course; and this will appear, if we consider these *two* things.

I. The sufferings of good men upon account of religion, together with the reward of them.

II. The temporary enjoyment of sin, with the mischiefs and inconveniencies consequent upon them.

I. The sufferings of good men upon the account of religion, together with the reward of them. This *Moses* had in his eye, when he made this choice; for therefore *he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin which are but for a season, because he had respect to the recompence of reward.* And tho' he had but a very imperfect discovery in comparison of the future state; yet, it seems, he had so much assurance of the goodness of God, as firmly to believe, that he should be no loser at the last, by any thing that he suffered for God and Religion.

Indeed,

Indeed, if there were no life after this, and we had no expectation beyond this world, the wisest thing we could do, would be to enjoy as much of the present contentment of this world, as we could make ourselves masters of. But if we be designed for immortality, and shall be unspeakably happy, or intolerably miserable in another world, according as we have demeaned ourselves in this life; then certainly it is reasonable, that we should take the greatest care of the longest duration, and be content to dispense with some present inconveniencies for an eternal felicity; and be willing to labour and take pains for a little while, that we may be happy for ever. And this is accounted prudence in the account of the wisest men, to part with a little at present, for a far greater future advantage.

But the disproportion betwixt time and eternity is so vast, that, did we but firmly believe, that we shall live for ever, nothing in this world could reasonably be thought too good to part withal, or too grievous to suffer, for the obtaining of a blessed immortality. And upon this belief and persuasion of a mighty reward, beyond all their present sufferings, and that they should be infinite gainers at the last, the primitive Christians were kept from sinking under their present sufferings, and fortified against all that the malice and cruelty of the world could do unto them. And if we would consider all things together, and mind the invisible things of another world, as well as the things which are seen, we should easily discern, that he who suffers for God and religion does not renounce his happiness, but put it out to interest upon terms of greatest advantage, and does wisely consider his own best and most lasting interest. This is the *First*.

II. This will yet more evidently appear, if we consider the temporary enjoyments of sin, together with the mischiefs and inconveniencies attending, and consequent upon them; that as to the nature of them,

SERMON. they are mix'd and imperfect; as to the duration of them, they are short, and but for a season; and as to the final issue and consequence of them, that they end in misery and sorrow.

III.

1. As to the nature of them, all the pleasures and enjoyments of sin are mix'd and imperfect. A wicked man may make a shew of mirth and pleasure, *but even in laughter his heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.* There can be no true and sincere pleasure in any sinful and vicious course, tho' it be attended with all the pomp and splendor of outward happiness and prosperity; for wherever sin and vice is, there must be guilt; and wherever guilt is, the mind will be restless and unquiet.

For there are two very troublesome and tormenting passions, which are naturally consequent upon guilt; shame and fear: Shame arising from the apprehension of the danger of being discovered; and fear, from the apprehension of the danger of being punished: And these do continually haunt the sinner, and fill him with inward horror and confusion in his most secret retirements. And if sin were attended with no other trouble but the guilt of it, a wise man would not commit it, if it were for no other reason, but merely for the peace and quiet of his own mind.

2. The enjoyments of sin, as to the duration of them, are but short. Upon this consideration, *Moses* set no price and value upon them, but preferred affliction and suffering in good company, and in a good cause, before *the temporary enjoyments of sin.*

If the enjoyments of this world were perfect in their nature, and had no mixture of trouble and sorrow in them; yet this would be a great abatement of them, that they are of so short and uncertain a continuance. The pleasure of most sins expires with the act of them; and when that is done, the delight vanissheth.

I cannot deny but that there are several wordly advantages to be purchased by sin, which may perhaps

haps be of a longer continuance ; as riches and honours, the common purchase of covetousness and ambition, and of that long train of inferiour vices which attend upon them, and minister unto them: But even those enjoyments are, in their own nature, of an uncertain continuance, and much more uncertain for being purchased by indirect and ill means. But if the enjoyment of these things were sure to be of the same date with our lives ; yet how short a duration is that, compared with eternity ? Make the utmost allowance to these things, that can be, yet we can but enjoy them whilst we are in this world. When we come into the world of spirits, it will signify nothing to us to have been rich or great in this world. When we shall stand before that highest tribunal, it will not avail us in the least to have been princes, and great men, and judges on the earth ; the poorest man that ever lived in this world will then be upon equal terms with the biggest of us all.

For all mankind shall then stand upon a level, and those civil distinctions of rich and poor, of base and honourable, which seem now so considerable, and make such a glaring difference amongst men in this world, shall all then be laid aside, and moral differences shall only take place. All the distinctions which will then be made, will be betwixt the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked ; and the difference betwixt a good and bad man, will be really much greater, than ever it seemed to be betwixt the highest and meanest persons in this world.

And if this be so, why should we value the enjoyments of sin at so high a rate, which, at the best, are only considerable (and that only in the imagination of vain men) during our abode in this world ; but bear no price at all in that country where we must live for ever : Or if they did, we cannot carry them along with us. The guilt of them, indeed, will follow us with a vengeance ; the injustice and all the ill arts we have used for the getting or keeping of

S E R M. them, especially, if at once we have *made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.*

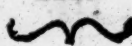
III.

If we have changed our Religion, or, which is much worse, if continuing in the profession of it, we have betrayed it, and the interest of it, for the gaining or securing of any of these things; we shall find, to our sorrow, that tho' *the enjoyments of sin* were *but for a season*, the guilt will never leave us nor forsake us; but will stick close to us, and make us miserable for ever. But this belongs to the

III^d. Thing I propos'd to speak to, namely, the final issue and consequence of a sinful course; which is misery and sorrow, many times in this world; but most certainly in the next.

I. In this world, the very best issue and consequence of a sinful course, that we can imagine, is repentance: And even this hath a great deal of sensible pain and trouble in it; for it is many times (especially after great sins, and a long continuance in them) accompanied with much regret and horror; with deep and piercing sorrow; with dismal and despairing thoughts of God's mercy; and with fearful apprehensions of his wrath and vengeance. So that, if this were the worst consequence of sin, (which indeed is the best) no man that considers and calculates things wisely, would purchase the pleasure of any sin, at the price of so much anguish and sorrow as a true and deep repentance will cost him; especially, since a true repentance does, in many cases, oblige men to the restitution of that which hath been gained by sin, if it hath been got by the injury of another.

And this consideration quite takes away the pleasure and profit of an ill-gotten estate. Better never to have had it, than to be obliged to refund it. A wise man will forbear the most pleasant meats, if he know before-hand that they will make him deadly sick, and that he shall never be at ease, till he have brought them up again.

No man that believes the threatnings of God, and S E R M.
the judgments of another world, would ever sin, but III.
that he hopes to retrieve all again by repentance. But 
it is the greatest folly in the world to commit any sin
upon this hope: For that is to please ones self for the
present; in hopes to have more trouble afterwards
than the pleasure comes to. But, especially no man
would be guilty of an act of injustice and oppression,
in hopes to repent of it afterwards; because there can
be no repentance for such sins without restitution;
and 'tis perfect madness for a man to run the hazard
of his soul to get an estate, in hopes of restoring it
again; for so he must do that truly repents of such
a sin. But,

2. In the other world, the final issue and conse-
quence of all the pleasures of sin unrepented of, will
certainly be misery and sorrow. How quietly soever
a sinner may pass through this world, or out of it,
misery will certainly overtake him in the next, un-
speakable and eternal misery, arising from an appre-
hension of the greatest loss, and a sense of the sharpest
pain; and those sadly aggravated by the remem-
brance of past pleasure, and the despair of future ease.

From a sad apprehension and melancholy reflection
upon his inestimable loss. In the other world, the
sinner shall be eternally separated from God, who is
the fountain of happiness. This is the first part of
that miserable sentence which shall be passed upon the
wicked; *depart from me.*

Sinners are not now sensible of the joys of heaven,
and the happiness of that state, and therefore are not
capable of estimating the greatness of such a loss:
But this stupidity and insensibleness of sinners, con-
tinues only during this present state, which affords
men variety of objects and pleasures to divert and en-
tertain them: But when they are once entered upon
the other world, they will then have nothing else to
take up their thoughts, but the sad condition, into
which by their own wilful negligence and folly they
have

S E R M. have plunged themselves. They shall then *lift up*
 III. *their eyes*, and with the rich man in the parable, at
 once *see the happiness of others, and feel their own*
misery and torment.

But this is not all. Besides the apprehension of so great a loss, they shall be sensible of the forest and sharpest pains; and how grievous those shall be we may conjecture by what the Scripture says of them in general; that they are the effects of a mighty displeasure, of anger and omnipotence met together, far greater than can be described by any pains and sufferings which we are acquainted withal in this world: *For who knows the power of God's anger, and the utmost of what omnipotent justice can do to sinners? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

One would think, this were misery enough, and needed no farther aggravation: But yet it hath two terrible ones; from the remembrance of past pleasures, and the despair of any future ease and remedy.

The remembrance of past pleasure makes present sufferings more sharp and sensible. For as nothing commends pleasure more, and gives a quicker relish to happiness, than precedent pain and suffering: (for perhaps there is not a greater pleasure in the world, than in the sudden ease which a man finds after a sharp fit of the stone) so nothing enrageth affliction more, and sets a keener edge upon misery, than to pass into great pain immediately out of a state of ease and pleasure. This was the stinging aggravation of the rich man's torment, that *in his life time he had received his good things, and had fared so deliciously every day.*

But the greatest aggravation of all is, the despair of any future ease and remedy. The duration of this misery is set forth to us in Scripture, by such expressions as do signify the longest and most interminable duration. *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, Matth. 25. and Mark 9. 43. Where the worm dies*
 not,

not, and the fire is not quenched. And in the Revelation it is said, that *the wicked shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever*, without intermission, and without end. And this surely is the perfection of misery, for a man to lie under the greatest torments, and to be in despair of ever finding the least ease.

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Let us now compare things together; on the one hand the sufferings of good men, for a good conscience, and the reward that follows them; and on the other hand, the enjoyments of sin, and the mischief and misery that attend them, and will certainly overtake them in this world, or in the next: And then we shall easily discern which of these is to be preferred in a wise man's choice.

And indeed the choice is so very plain, that a man must be very strangely forsaken of his reason, and blinded by sense, who does not prefer that course of life, which will probably make him happier in this world, but most certainly in the next.

IV. There remains now only the *fourth* and last particular to be spoken to; viz. supposing this choice to be reasonable, to enquire whence it comes to pass, that so many make a quite contrary choice. How is it, that the greatest part of mankind are so widely mistaken, as to prefer the temporary enjoyments of sin before conscience and religion; especially, if it be attended with great afflictions and sufferings? and of this, I shall give you as brief an account as I can, and so conclude this discourse.

This wrong choice generally proceeds from one or both of these two causes; from want of faith; or from want of consideration; or of both.

1. One great reason why men make so imprudent a choice, is unbelief; either the want of faith, or the weakness of it. Either men do not believe the recompenses of another life, or they are not so firmly persuaded of the reality of them. If men do not at all believe these things, there is no foundation for religion;

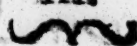
SER M. *ligion; for he that cometh unto God (that is, he that*
 III. *thinks of being religious) must believe, that God is,*
 and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, as the Apostle reasons in the beginning of this chapter.

But I hope, there are but few that are, or can be infidels, as to these great and fundamental principles of religion. But it is to be feared, that the faith of a great many is but weak and wavering; their faith is rather negative; they do not disbelieve these things, but they are not firmly persuaded of them; their faith is rather an opinion, than a rooted and well grounded persuasion; and therefore no wonder, if it be not so strong and vigorous a principle of action, like the faith of *Abraham* and *Moses*; and other Worthies mentioned in this chapter. For where faith is in its full strength and vigour, it will have proportionable effects upon the resolutions and wills of men: But where it is but weak, it is of little or no efficacy. And this is the true reason, why so many forsake religion; and cleave to this present world; and when it comes to the push, chuse rather to sin, than to suffer; and will rather quit the truth, than endure prosecution for it.

These are they whom our Saviour describes, *who receive the word with joy, and endure for a while; but when tribulation and persecution ariseth because of the word, presently they are offended*: Not that they did not believe the word; but their faith had taken no deep root, and therefore it withered. The weakness and wavering of mens faith, makes them unstable and inconstant in their course; because they are not of one mind, but divided betwixt two interests, that of this world, and the other; and *the double-minded man* (as St. James tells us) *is unstable in all his ways*.

It is generally a true rule; so much wavering as we see in the actions and lives of men, so much weakness there is in their faith; and therefore he that
 would

would know what any man firmly believes, let him attend to his actions more than to his professions.

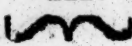
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If any man live so as no man that heartily believes the Christian religion can live, it is not credible, that such a man doth firmly believe the Christian religion. He says, he does; but there is a greater evidence in the case than words; there is *Testimonium rei*, the man's actions are to the contrary, and they do best declare the inward sense of the man. Did men firmly believe, that there is a God that governs the world, and that *he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge it in righteousness*; and that all mankind shall shortly appear before him, and give an account of themselves, and all their actions to him; and that those who have *kept the faith and a good conscience, and have lived soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world*, shall be unspeakably and eternally happy; but *the fearful and unbelieving*, those who out of fear or interest, have deserted the faith, or lived wicked lives, *shall have their portion in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone*; I say, were men firmly persuaded of these things, it is hardly credible, that any man should make a wrong choice, and forsake the ways of truth and righteousness, upon any temptation whatsoever.

Faith, even in temporal matters, is a mighty principle of action, and will make men to attempt and undergo strange and difficult things. The faith of the Gospel ought to be much more operative and powerful, because the objects of hope and fear, which it presents to us, are far greater, and more considerable, than any thing that this world can tempt or terrify us withal.

Would we but by faith make present to our minds, the invisible things of another world, the happiness of Heaven, and the terrors of Hell; and were we as verily persuaded of them, as if they were in our view, how should we despise all the pleasures and
terrors

S E R M. terrors of this world ; and with what ease should we

III. resist and repel all those temptations, which would
 seduce us from our duty, or draw us into sin!

A firm and unshaken belief of these things, would effectually remove all those mountains of difficulty and discouragement, which men fanfy to themselves in the ways of religion. *To him that believeth all things are possible*, and most things would be easy.

2. Another reason of this wrong choice is want of consideration ; for this would strengthen our faith, and make it more vigorous and powerful : And indeed a faith which is well rooted and established doth suppose a wise and deep consideration of things ; and the want of this is a great cause of the fatal miscarriage of men ; that they do not sit down and consider with themselves seriously, how much religion is their interest, and how much it will cost them to be true to it, and to persevere in it to the end.

We suffer our selves to be governed by sense, and to be transported with present things ; but do not consider our future and lasting interest, and the whole duration of an immortal soul. And this is the reason why so many men are hurried away by the present and sensible delights of this world, because they will not take time to think of what will be hereafter.

For it is not to be imagined, but that the man who hath seriously considered what sin is, the shortness of its pleasure, and the eternity of its punishment, should resolve to forsake sin, and to live a holy and virtuous life.

To conclude this whole discourse. If men did but seriously believe the great principles of religion ; the being and the providence of God ; the immortality of their souls ; the glorious rewards, and the dreadful punishments of another world, they could not possibly make so imprudent a choice, as we see a great part of mankind to do, they could not be induced to forsake God and Religion for any temporal interest and advantage ;

vantage; to renounce the favour of Heaven, and all S E R M. III.
 their hopes of happiness in another world, for any
 thing that this world can afford; nay not for the
 whole world, if it were offered to them. For as our
 Saviour reasons in this very case, of forsaking our
 Religion for any temporal interest, or consideration;
*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and
 lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange
 for his soul?*

Whenever any of us are tempted in this kind; let
 that solemn declaration of our Saviour and our judge
 be continually in our minds; *he that confesseth me before
 men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in
 heaven: but whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my
 words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him
 shall the son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in
 the glory of his Father, with his holy angels.*

And we have great cause to thank God, to see so
 many in this day of tryal, and hour of temptation,
 to adhere with so much resolution and constancy to
 their holy religion, and to prefer *the keeping of faith,
 and a good conscience,* to all earthly considerations and
 advantages.

And this very thing; that so many hold their re-
 ligion so fast, and are so loath to part with it, gives
 great hopes that they intend to make good use of it,
 and to frame their lives according to the holy rules and
 precepts of it; which alone can give us peace, whilst
 we live, and comfort when we come to die; and after
 death secure to us the possession of a happiness large as
 our wishes, and lasting as our souls.

*To which, God of his infinite goodness bring us all,
 for his mercy's sake, in Jesus Christ: To whom, with
 the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and
 glory, world without end. Amen.*

The first
Sermon on
This text.

S E R M O N IV.

Of Constancy in the Profession of the
true Religion.

+ HEB. X. 23.

Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; for he is faithful that hath promised.

S E R M.
IV.
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THE main scope and design of this Epistle to the *Hebrews* is to persuade the *Jews*, who were newly converted to Christianity, to continue stedfast in the profession of that holy and excellent religion which they had embraced; and not to be removed from it, either by the subtile insinuations of their brethren the *Jews*, who pretended that they were in possession of the true ancient Religion, and the only true church of God upon earth; or by the terror of the heathen persecution, which was so hot against them at that time. And to this end the author of this epistle doth by great variety of arguments demonstrate the excellency of the christian religion above the *Jewish* dispensation; and shews at large, that in all those respects upon which the *Jews* valued themselves and their religion (as namely upon the account of their law-giver, their high-priests, and their sacrifices) the christian religion had every way the advantage of them.

And having made this clear, he concludes this with an earnest exhortation to them to continue stedfast in
the

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the profession of this excellent Religion, which was S E R M
IV.
revealed to them by the Son of God, the true propitiatory sacrifice, and the great high-priest of their profession, and into which they had solemnly been initiated and admitted by baptism; *vers. 19, 20, 21, 22.* Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, that is, let us sincerely serve God with a firm persuasion of the truth and excellency of this holy religion, into the profession whereof we were solemnly admitted by baptism; for that is undoubtedly the meaning of the following words; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; the water with which our bodies are washed in baptism, signifying our spiritual regeneration, and the purging our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. From all which he concludes, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. This refers to that solemn profession of faith, which was made by all christians at their baptism, and which is contained in the ancient creed of the christian church, called by the ancient fathers, the rule of faith.

Let us hold fast, *κατακραίνω*, let us firmly retain; the same with *κατακραίνω τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ*, Chap. 4. 14. Seeing then we have a great high-priest which is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take fast hold of our profession. So here in the text; the apostle upon the same consideration exhorts christians to retain or hold fast, *τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος*, the confession, or profession of their hope; that is, the hope of the resurrection of the dead, and everlasting life, which was the conclusion of that faith or creed, whereof in baptism they made a solemn profession. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith or hope, without wavering; the word is *ἀκλινῆ*, inflexible, unmoveable, stedd, and not apt to wav. r

S E R M. *waver and be shaken by every wind of contrary doctrine, nor by the blasts and storms of persecution.*

IV. *For he is faithful that hath promised.* If we continue faithful and steddy to God, he will be *faithful*, to make good all the promises he hath made to us.

In the words thus explained, there are *two* things which I shall distinctly consider.

First, The exhortation : *Let us hold fast the profession of the faith, without wavering* : And,

Secondly, The argument or encouragement used to enforce it ; *He is faithful that promised.* I begin with the

First, The exhortation to be constant and steddy in the profession of the christian religion ; *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* In the handling of this, and that we may the better understand the true meaning of this exhortation here in the text, I shall do these *two* things.

I. I shall shew negatively, wherein this constancy and steddiness in the profession of the true religion does not consist. And here I shall remove one or two things, which are thought by some to be inconsistent with constancy and steadfastness in religion.

II. I shall shew positively what is implied in a constant and steddy profession of the true religion.

I. I shall shew negatively, what constancy and steadfastness in the profession of the true religion does not imply. And there are two things which are thought by some to be implied, in *holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering.*

First, That men should not take the liberty to examine their religion, and enquire into the grounds and reasons of it.

Secondly, That men should obstinately refuse to hear any reasons that can be brought against the true religion, as they think, which they have once entertained.

First, That men should not take the liberty to examine their religion, and to enquire into the grounds and

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my. *as they think*

and reasons of it. This, I think, is so far from being forbidden in this exhortation, that, on the contrary, I doubt not to make it appear, that a free and impartial enquiry into the grounds and reasons of our religion, and a thorough trial and examination of them, is one of the best means to confirm and establish us in the profession of it: I mean, that all persons that are capable of it, should do it, and that they will find great benefit and advantage by it. For I do not think, that this is a duty equally and indifferently incumbent upon all; nor indeed fit and proper for all persons; because all are not equally capable of doing it. There are two sorts of persons that are in a great measure incapable of doing it.

1. Children.

2. Such grown persons as are of a very mean and low capacity, and improvement of understanding.

Children are not fit to examine, but only to learn and believe what is taught them by their parents and teachers. They are fit to have the fear of God, and the principles of the true religion, instilled into them; but they are by no means fit to discern between a true and false religion, and to chuse for themselves, and to make a change of their religion; as hath of late been allowed to them in a nation not far from us, and by publick edict declared, that children at *seven* years old, are fit to chuse and to change their religion: Which is the first law I ever heard of, that allows children at that age to do any act for themselves, that is of consequence and importance to them, for the remaining parts of their lives, and which they shall stand obliged to perform and make good. They are indeed baptized, according to the custom and usage of the christian church, in their infancy: But they do not enter into this obligation themselves; but their sureties undertake for them, that when they come to age, they shall take this promise upon themselves, and confirm and make it good. But surely, they can do no

S E R M. act for themselves, and in their own name, at that age, which can be obligatory. They can neither make any contracts that shall be valid, nor incur any debt, nor oblige themselves by any promise, nor chuse themselves a guardian, nor do any act that may bring them under an inconvenience, when they shall come at age. And can we think them of discretion sufficient at that time, to do a thing of the greatest moment and consequence of all other, and which will concern them to all eternity; namely, to chuse their religion? There is indeed one part of one religion (which we all know) which children at *seven* years of age are fit (I do not say to judge of, but) to be as fond of, and to practise to as good purpose, as those of riper years; and that is, to worship images, to tell their beads, to say their prayers, and to be present at the service of God in an unknown tongue; and this they are more likely to chuse at that age, than those who are of riper and more improved understandings; and if they do not chuse it at that time, it is ten to one they will not chuse it afterwards. I shall say no more of this, but that it is a very extraordinary law, and such as perhaps was never thought of before, from the beginning of the world. Thus much for children.

As for grown persons, who are of a very low and mean capacity of understanding, and either by reason of the weakness of their faculties, or other disadvantages which they lie under, are in little or no probability of improving themselves: These are always to be considered as in the condition of children, and learners, and therefore must of necessity, in things, which are not plain and obvious to the meanest capacities, trust and rely upon the judgment of others. And it is really much wiser and safer for them so to do, than to depend upon their own judgments, and to lean to their own understandings; and such persons, if they be modest and humble, and pray earnestly to God for his assistance and direction, and are careful to practise what they know, and to live up to the

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the best light and knowledge which they have, shall not miscarry merely for want of those farther degrees of knowledge which they had no capacity nor opportunity to attain ; because their ignorance is unavoidable, and God will require no more of them than he hath given them, and will not call them to account for the improvement of those talents, which he never committed to them. And if they be led into any dangerous error, by the negligence or ill conduct of those, under whose care and instruction the providence of God permitted them to be placed, God will not impute it to them as a fault ; because in the circumstances in which they were, they took the best and wisest course that they could, to come to the knowledge of the truth, by being willing to learn what they could of whom they took to be wiser than themselves.

But for such persons, who by the maturity of their age, and by the natural strength and clearness of their understandings, or by the due exercise and improvement of them, are capable of enquiring into, and understanding the grounds of their religion, and discerning the difference betwixt truth and error (I do not mean in unnecessary points, and matters of deepest learning and speculation, but in matters necessary to salvation) it is certainly very reasonable, that such persons should examine their religion, and understand the reasons and grounds of it.

And this must either be granted to be reasonable, or else every man must continue in that religion in which he happens to be fixed by education, or for any other reason to pitch upon, when he comes to years, and makes his free choice. For if this be a good principle, that no man is to examine his religion, but take it as it is, and to believe it, and rest satisfied with it ; then every man is to remain in the religion which he first lights upon, whether by choice or the chance of his education. For he ought not to change but upon reason ; and reason he can have none, unless

S E R M. less he be allowed to examine his religion, and to compare it with others, that by the comparison he may discern which is best, and ought in reason to be preferred in his choice. For to him that will not, or is not permitted to search into the grounds of any religion, all religions are alike; as all things are of the same colour to him that is always kept in the dark; or if he happens to come into the light, dares not open his eyes, and make use of them to discern the different colours of things.

But this is evidently, and at first sight unreasonable; because at this rate, every man that hath once entertained an error, and a false religion, must for ever continue in it. For if he be not allowed to examine it, he can never have reason to change; and to make a change without reason, is certainly unreasonable, and mere vanity and inconstancy.

And yet, for ought I can see, this is the principle which the church of *Rome* doth, with great zeal and earnestness inculcate upon their people; discouraging all doubts and enquiries about their religion, as temptations of the devil; and all examinations of the grounds and reasons of their religion, as an inclination and dangerous step towards heresy. For what else can they mean, by taking the Scriptures out of the hands of the people, and locking them up from them in an unknown tongue; by requiring them absolutely to submit their judgments, and to resign them up to that which they are pleased to call the Catholick Church, and implicitly to believe as she believes, tho' they know not what that is? This is, in truth, to believe as their priest tells them; for that is all the teaching part of the church, and all the rule of faith that the common people are acquainted with.

And it is not sufficient to say in this matter, that when men are in the truth, and of the right religion, and in the bosom of the true church, they ought to rest satisfied, and to examine and enquire no farther. For this is manifestly unreasonable, and that upon these three accounts.

1. Because

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1. Because this is a plain and shameful begging of SERM. 2
the thing in question; and that which every church, IV.
and every religion doth almost with equal confidence
pretend to; that theirs is the only right religion,
and the only true church. And these pretences are
all alike reasonable to him that never examined the
grounds of any of them, nor hath compared them to-
gether. And therefore it is the vainest thing in the
world for the church of *Rome* to pretend, that all re-
ligions in the world ought to be examined, but
theirs; because theirs, and none else, is the true re-
ligion. For this which they say so confidently of it,
that it is the true religion, no man can know till he
hath examined it, and searched into the grounds of
it, and hath considered the objections which are
against it. So that it is fond partiality to say, that
their religion is not to be examined by the people
that profess it, but that all other religions ought to
be examined, or rather, because they are different
from that which they presume to be the only true
Religion, ought to be condemned at all adventures,
without any farther enquiry: This, I say, is fond
partiality; because every religion, and every Church,
may (for ought that appears, to any man that is not
permitted to examine things impartially) say the same
for themselves, and with as much reason; and if so,
then either every religion ought to permit it self to be
examined; or else no man ought to examine his own
religion, whatever it be; and consequently *Jews*,
and *Turks*, and *Heathens*, and *Hereticks*, ought all
to continue as they are, and none of them to change;
because they cannot reasonably change without exa-
mining both that religion which they leave, and that
which they embrace instead of it.

2. Admitting this pretence were true, that they
are the true Church, and have the true religion; this
is so far from being a reason why they should not
permit it to be examined, that, on the contrary, it
is one of the best reasons in the world why they

S E R M. should allow it to be examined, and why they may
 IV. safely suffer it to be so. They should permit it to be
 tried, that men may upon good reason be satisfied
 that it is the true religion: And they may safely suffer
 it to be done; because, if they be sure that the
 grounds of their religion be firm and good, I am
 sure they will be never the worse for being examined
 and looked into. But I appeal to every man's reason,
 whether it be not an ill sign that they are not so sure
 that the grounds of their religion are solid and firm,
 and such as will abide the trial; that they are so very
 loth to have them searched into and examined? This
 cannot but tempt a wise man to suspect, that their
 church is not founded upon a rock; and that they
 themselves know something that is amiss in their re-
 ligion, which makes them so loth to have it try'd,
 and brought to the touch.

3. It is certain among all christians, that the doctrine
 preached by the Apostles was the true faith of
Christ; and yet they never forbad the christians to
 examine whether it was so or not: Nay, on the contrary,
 they frequently exhort them to try and examine
 their religion, and whether that doctrine which they
 had delivered to them was the true faith of *Christ*.
 So St. Paul, 2 Corinth. 13. 5. *examine your selves,*
whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. And
 again, 1 Thess. 5. 21. *prove all things, hold fast that*
which is good; intimating to us, that in order to the
 holding fast the profession of our faith, it is requisite
 to prove and try it. And so likewise St. John's
 Ep. 1. 4. 1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try*
the spirits whether they are of God; because many false
Prophets are gone out into the world. And he gives
 a very notable mark whereby we may know the spirit
 of truth, and the spirit of error. The spirit of error
 carries on a worldly interest and design; and the
 doctrines of it tend to secular power and greatness;
 verse 5. *they are of the world; therefore speak they of*
 the

the world, and the world beareth them. Acts 17. 11. SERM. IV.
 St. Luke commends it, as an argument of a more noble and generous spirit in the *Bereans*, that they examined the doctrine which the Apostles preached, *whether it were agreeable to the Scriptures*; and this without disparagement to their infallibility: *These*, saith he, *were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so.* They were ready to receive the word; but not blindly, and with an implicit faith, but using due care to examine the doctrines which they were taught, and to see if they were agreeable to that divine revelation of the holy Scriptures which they had before received. It seems they were not willing to admit and swallow contradictions in their faith. And we desire no more of the church of *Rome*, than that they would encourage the people to *search the Scriptures daily*, and to *examine whether* their doctrines be *according to them.* We would be glad to hear the Pope and a General Council commend to the people *the searching of the Scriptures*, and to try their definitions of faith and decrees of worship by that rule, to see whether what they have defined, and decreed to be believed and practised, be agreeable to it; their worship of images; their solemn invocation of Angels, and of the blessed Virgin, and the saints departed; the Sacrament under one kind only; the publick prayers and service of God in an unknown tongue; the frequent repetition of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's body and blood in the mass. Had the *Bereans* been at the Council of *Trent*, and pleaded their right to *search the Scriptures, whether these things were so*, I doubt, they would have been thought very troublesome and impertinent, and would not have been praised by the Pope and Council for their pains, as they are by St. *Luke*.

You see then, upon the whole matter, that it is a very groundless and suspicious pretence of the church
 of

SERM. of Rome, that because they are infallibly in the right,
 IV. and theirs is the true religion, therefore their people
 must not be permitted to examine it. The doctrine
 of the Apostles was undoubtedly the true faith of
 Christ; and yet they not only permitted the people
 to examine it, but exhorted and encouraged them so
 to do, and commended them for it: And any man,
 that hath the spirit of a man, must abhor to submit to
 this slavery, not to be allowed to examine his re-
 ligion, and to enquire freely into the grounds and
 reasons of it; and would break with any church in
 the world upon this single point; and would tell
 them plainly, if your religion be too good to be exa-
 mined, I doubt, it is too bad to be believed.

If it be said, that the allowing of this liberty is the
 way to make people perpetually doubting and unset-
 tled; I do utterly deny this, and do on the contrary
 with good reason affirm, that it is apt to have the
 contrary effect; there being in reason no better way
 to establish any man in the belief of any thing, than
 to let him see that there are very good grounds and
 reasons for what he believes; which no man can
 ever see, that is not permitted to examine whether
 there be such reasons or not. So that, besides the
 reasonableness of the thing, it is of great benefit and
 advantage to us; and that upon these accounts.

I. To arm us against seducers. He that hath exa-
 mined his religion, and tried the grounds of it, is
 most able to maintain them, and make them good
 against all assaults that may be made upon us, to
 move us from our steadfastness: Whereas he that hath
 not examined, and consequently does not understand
 the reasons of his religion, is liable to be *tossed to and
 fro, and to be carried about with every wind of doctrine,
 by the slight of men, and the cunning craftiness of those
 that lie in wait to deceive.* For when he is attempted,
 he will either defend his religion, or not: If he un-
 dertake the defence of it, before he hath examined
 the grounds of it, he makes himself an easy prey to
 every

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every crafty man that will set upon him; he exposeth at once himself to danger, and his religion to disgrace: If he decline the defence of it, he must be forced to take sanctuary in that ignorant and obstinate principle, that because he is of an infallible church, and sure that he is in the right, therefore he never did nor will examine whether he be so or not. But how is he, or can he be sure that he is in the right, if he have no other reason for it, but his confidence, and his being *wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason?* It is a shameful thing in a wise man, who is able to give a good reason of all other actions and parts of his life, to be able to say nothing for his religion, which concerns him more than all the rest.

2. To examine and understand the grounds of our Religion, will be a good means (by the assistance of God's grace) to keep us constant to it, even under the fiery trial. When it comes to this, that a man must suffer for his religion, he had need to be well established in the belief of it; which no man can so well be, as he that in some measure understands the grounds and reasons of his belief. A man would be well assured of the truth and goodness of that for which he would lay down his life; otherwise *he dies as a fool dies*, he knows not for what. A man would be loth to set such a seal to a blank, I mean to that which he hath no sufficient ground and reason to believe to be true; which, whether he hath or not, no man that hath not examined the grounds of his religion can be well assured of. This St. Peter prescribes, as the best preparative for suffering for righteousness sake, the first Epistle of Peter, 3. 14, 15. *But if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; (that is, make him the great object of your dread and trust) and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*

Secondly,

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Secondly, The holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering, doth not imply, that men should obstinately refuse to hear any reason against that religion, which they have embraced, and think to be the true religion. As men should examine before they chuse; so after they have chosen, they should be ready to be better informed, if better reason can be offered. No man ought to think himself so infallible as to be privileged from hearing reason, and from having his doctrines and dictates try'd by that test.

Our blessed Saviour himself, the most infallible person that ever was in the world, and who *declared the truth which he had heard of God*, yet he offered himself and his doctrine to this tryal. *John 8. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? that is, of falsehood and error; And if I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me?* He was sure he speak the truth; and yet for all that, if they could convince him of error and mistake, he was ready to hear any reason they could bring to that purpose. Though a man be never so sure that he is in the true Religion, and never so resolved to continue constant and stedfast in it; yet reason is always to be heard, when it is fairly offered. And as we ought always to be *ready to give an answer to those who ask a reason of the hope and faith that is in us*, so ought we likewise to be ready to hear the reasons which others do fairly offer against our opinion and persuasion in religion, and to debate the matter with them; that if we be in the right, and they in the wrong, we may rectify their mistake, and *instruct them in meekness, if God peradventure may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.*

We are not only to examine our religion, before we peremptorily fix upon it; but after we are, as we think upon the best reason, establish'd and settled in it. Tho' we ought not to doubt and waver in our Religion upon every slight and trifling objection that can

2.
The art of
being constant

can be brought against it; yet we ought always to S E R M. IV.
have an ear open to hear reason, and consider any
thing of weight and moment that can be offered to
us about it. For it is a great disparagement to truth,
and argues a distrust of the goodness of our cause and
Religion, to be afraid to hear what can be said against
it; as if truth were so weak, that in every conflict
it were in danger to be baffled and run down, and
go by the worst; and as if the reasons that could be
brought against it, were too hard for it, and not to
be encounter'd by those forces which truth has on its
side.

We have that honest confidence of the goodness of
our cause and Religion, that we do not fear what
can be said against it; and therefore we do not forbid
our people to examine the objections of our adver-
saries, and to read the best book they can write against
it. But the Church of *Rome* are so *wise in their ge-
neration*, that they will not permit those of their
Communion to hear or read what can be said against
them: Nay, they will not permit the people the
use of the holy Scriptures, which they, with us, ac-
knowledge to be at least an essential part of the rule
of faith. They tell their people, that after they are
once of their Church and Religion, they ought not
to hear any reasons against it; and though they be
never so strong, they ought not to entertain any doubt
concerning it; because all doubting is a temptation
of the devil, and a mortal sin. But surely that
Church is not to be heard, which will not hear rea-
son; nor that Religion to be much admired, which
will not allow those that have once embrac'd it, to
hear it ever after debated and examined. This is a
very suspicious business, and argues, that either they
have not truth on their side; or that truth is a weak,
and pitiful, and sneaking thing, and not able to
make its party good against error.

I should now have proceeded in the *second* place, to
shew *positively* what is implied in *holding fast the pro-
fession*

S E R M. *fession of our faith without wavering; and then to have*
 IV. considered the argument and encouragement hereto,
 *Because he is faithful that promised. But I shall proceed no farther at this time.*

*The second
 Sermon in
 this Text.*

S E R M O N V.

Of Constancy in the Profession of the
 true Religion.

X H E B. X. 23.

*Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith
 without wavering; for he is faithful that
 promised.*

S E R M.
 V.

 I Have already made entrance into these words,
 which I told you do contain in them,
*First, An Exhortation to hold fast the profession
 of our Faith without wavering.*

*Secondly, An argument or encouragement thereto;
 because he is faithful that promised. If we continue
 stedfast and faithful to God, we shall find him faith-
 ful to us, in making good all the promises which he
 hath made to us, whether of aid and support, or of
 recompense and reward of our fidelity to him.*

I have begun to handle the *first* part of the text,
*viz. The Apostle's exhortation to Christians to be
 constant and steddy in their religion: Let us hold
 fast the profession of our Faith without wavering. The
 word ἀκλιν, which we render without wavering, sig-
 nifies inflexible and unmovable, not apt to waver
 and to be shaken with every wind of contrary doctrine,
 nor by the blasts and storms of persecution. And*
 that

that we might the better comprehend the full and true meaning of this exhortation, I propounded to do these *two* things. S E R M.
V.


I. To shew *negatively*, wherein this constancy and steddiness in the profession of the true Religion doth not consist. And,

II. To shew *positively*, what is implied and intended here by the Apostle in *holding fast the profession of our Faith without wavering*.

I. To shew *negatively*, wherein this constancy and steddiness in the profession of the true Religion doth not consist. This I spake to the last day; and shewed at large, that there are *two* things which are not contained and intended in this exhortation.

1. That men should not have the liberty to examine their religion, and to inquire into the grounds and reasons of it; 'such I mean as are capable of this examination and enquiry; which some, I shewed, are not; as children, who while they are in that state, are only fit to learn and believe what is taught them by their parents and teachers: And likewise such grown persons, as either by the natural weakness of their faculties, or by some great disadvantage of education, are of a very low and mean capacity and improvement of understanding. These are to be considered, as in the condition of children and learners; and therefore must of necessity trust and rely upon the judgment of others.

2. This *holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, does not imply, that when men upon examination and enquiry are settled, as they think and verily believe, in the true Religion, they should obstinately refuse to hear any reason that can be offered against them. Both these principles I shewed to be unreasonable, and arguments of a bad cause and religion.

I shall now proceed to explain the meaning of this exhortation, to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, by shewing in the

Second

S E R M.

V.

Second place, what it is that is implied in the constant and steddy profession of the true faith and Religion; namely, that when upon due search and examination, we are fully satisfied, that it is the true Religion which we have embraced, or as St. Peter expresses it; 1st Epistle, 5. 12. that *this is the true grace of God, wherein we stand*; that then we should adhere stedfastly to it, and *hold it fast*, and not suffer it to be wrested from us; nor ourselves to be moved from it, by any pretences, or insinuations, or temptations whatsoever; For there is a great deal of difference between the confidence and stedfastness of an ignorant man, who hath never considered things, and enquired into the grounds of them; and the assurance and settlement of one, who hath been well instructed in his religion, and hath taken pains to search and examine to the bottom, the grounds and reasons of what he holds and professeth to believe. The first is mere willfulness and obstinacy. A man hath entertained; and drank in such principles of religion by education, or hath taken them up by chance; but he hath no reason for them: And yet, however he came by them, he is resolved to hold them fast, and not to part with them. The other is the resolution and constancy of a wise man. He hath embraced his religion upon good grounds, and he sees no reason to alter it: And therefore is resolved to stick to it, and to *hold fast the profession of it* stedfastly to the end. And to this purpose there are many exhortations and cautions scatter'd up and down the writings of the holy Apostles; as that we should be *stedfast and unmoveable, established in the truth, rooted and grounded in the faith*, and that we should *hold fast that which is good*, and not suffer ourselves to be carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine, through the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness of those that lye in wait to deceive; that we should not be removed from him that hath called us unto the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; that we should stand fast

in

in one spirit and one mind, striving together for the faith S E R M.
of the Gospel, and be in nothing terrified by our adver- V.
saries; and that if occasion be, we should contend
earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the
saints; and here in the text, that we should hold fast
the profession of our faith without wavering. For the
explaining of this, I shall do two things;

I. Consider *what* it is that we are to hold fast;
namely, the profession of our faith; And,

II. *How* we are to hold it fast, or what is implied
in holding fast the profession of our faith without wa-
vering.

I. *What* it is that we are to hold fast; namely, the
profession of our faith; i. e. of the Christian faith or
religion: For, I told you before, that this profession
or confession of our faith, or hope (as the word proper-
ly signifies) is an allusion to *that* profession of faith
which was made by all those who were admitted
members of the Christian church by baptism; of
which the Apostle makes mention immediately be-
fore the text, when he says, *let us draw near in full
assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an
evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water:*
And then it follows, *let us hold fast the profession of
our faith without wavering.* The profession of faith
which we made in our baptism, and which by the
ancient fathers is called *the rule of faith*, and which is
now contained in that which we call *the Apostles creed*,
and which is called by St. Paul, Rom. 6. 17. *the
form of doctrine which was delivered to them, i. e. to
all Christians;* and 2 Tim. 1. 13. *the form of sound
words;* Hold fast, faith he, *the form of sound words,
which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which
is in Christ Jesus;* and by St. Jude, *the faith which
was once delivered unto the saints.*

So that it is the first and ancient faith of the Chris-
tian church, delivered to them by Christ and his
Apostles, which we are here exhorted to hold fast;
the necessary and fundamental articles of the Christian

S E R M. faith; and by consequence all those truths which have
 V. a necessary connexion with those articles, and are
 implied in them, and by plain consequence are to be
 deduced from them. It is not the doubtful and un-
 certain traditions of men; nor the partial dictates
 and doctrines of any church, since the primitive
 times, which are not contained in the holy Scriptures
 and the ancient creeds of the Christian church, but
 have been since declared and imposed upon the Chris-
 tian world, tho' with never so confident a pretence
 of antiquity in the doctrines, and of infallibility in
 the proposers of them: These are no part of *that*
faith which we are either to *profess* or to *bold fast*;
 because we have no reason to admit the pretences,
 by virtue whereof those doctrines or practices are
 imposed; being able to make it good, and having
 effectually done it, that those doctrines are not of pri-
 mitive antiquity; and that the church which pro-
 poseth them, hath no more claim to infallibility,
 than all other parts of the Christian church; which
 since the Apostles time is none at all.

In a word; no other doctrines which are not suf-
 ficiently revealed in Scripture, either in exprefs terms
 or by plain and necessary consequence; nor any rites
 of worship, nor matters of practice, which are not
 commanded in Scripture, are to be esteemed any
 part of *that faith* in religion, *the profession* whereof
 the Apostle here commands all Christians to *bold fast*
without wavering; much less any doctrines or prac-
 tices which are repugnant to the word of God, and
 to the faith and practice of the first ages of Christia-
 nity; of which kind I shall have occasion in my fol-
 lowing discourse to instance in several particulars.
 In the mean time I shall only observe, that *that*
faith and religion which we *profess*, and which by
 God's grace, we have ever *beld fast*, is *that which*
 hath been acknowledg'd by all Christian churches in
 all ages, to have been *the ancient Catholick and Apo-*
stolick faith, and cannot (as to any part or tittle of it)

be

be denied to be so, even by the church of Rome S E R M.¹
herself.

V.

I proceed to the

II. Thing which I proposed to consider; namely, *how* we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith*, or what is implied by the Apostle, in this exhortation, *to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*. And I think, these following particulars may very well be supposed to be implied in it.

1. That we should *hold fast the profession of our faith*, against the confidence of men, without scripture, or reason to support their confidence.

2. And much more against the confidence of men, contrary to scripture, and reason, and the common sense of mankind.

3. Against all the temptations and terrors of the world.

4. Against all vain promises of being put into a safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to heaven upon easier terms in another religion.

5. Against all the cunning arts and insinuations of busy and disputing men, whose design is to unhinge men from their religion, and to gain proselytes to their own party and faction. I shall go over these with as much clearness and brevity as I can.

1. We should *hold fast the profession of our faith*, against the confidence of men, without scripture or reason to support that confidence. All religion is either natural or instituted. The rule of natural religion is the common reason of mankind: The rule of instituted religion is divine revelation, or the word of God; which all Christians before the council of *Trent* did agree to be contained in the holy scriptures. So that nothing can pretend to be religion, but what can be proved to be so, one or both of those ways; either by scripture, or by reason, or by both. And how confident soever men may be of opinions destitute of this proof, any man that understands the grounds of religion, will without any more

SERMON. do reject them, for want of this proof; and notwithstanding any pretended authority or infallibility of the church that imposeth them, will have no more consideration and regard of them, than of the confident dictates and assertions of any enthusiast whatsoever; because there is no reason to have regard to any man's confidence, if the arguments and reasons which he brings, bear no proportion to it. We see in experience, that confidence is generally ill grounded, and is a kind of passion in the understanding, and is commonly made use of, like fury and force, to supply for the weakness and want of argument. If a man can prove what he says by good argument, there is no need of confidence to back and support it. We may at any time trust a plain and substantial reason, and leave it to make its own way, and to bear out itself. But if the man's reasons and arguments be not good, his confidence adds nothing of real force to them, in the opinion of wise men, and tends only to its own confusion. Arguments are like power, which will carry and do execution according to its true strength; and all the rest is but noise. And generally none are so much to be suspected of error, or a design to deceive, as those that pretend most confidently to inspiration and infallibility; as we see in all sorts of enthusiasts, who pretend to inspiration, altho' we have nothing but their own word for it; for they work no miracles; and all pretence to inspiration and infallibility, without miracles, whether it be in particular persons, or in whole churches, is enthusiastical: *i. e.* a pretence to inspiration, without any proof of it.

And therefore St. *Paul* was not moved by the boasting and confidence of the false Apostles; because they gave no proof and evidence of their divine inspiration and commission, as he had done; for which he appeals to the sense of men, whether he had not wrought great miracles; which the false Apostles had not done, tho' they had the confidence

to give out themselves to be Apostles as well as he; S E R M.
2 Cor. 12. 11, 12. *I am (says he) become a fool in V.
glorying, ye have compelled me. And truly the signs of
an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in
signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. And Rev. 2. 2.
Christ there commends the church of Ephesus, be-
cause she had tried them which said they were Apostles,
but were not; and had found them liars. And as we
are not to believe every one that says he is an Apostle,
so neither every one that pretends to be a successor of
the Apostles, and to be endued with the same spirit of
infallibility that they were: For these also, when they
are tried whether they be the successors of the Apostles or
not, may be found liars. And therefore St. John
cautions Christians not to believe every spirit, (that is,
every one that pretends to divine inspiration, and the
spirit of God,) but to try the spirits whether they be of
God; because many false prophets are gone out into the
world, 1 John 4. 1. And therefore the confidence
of men in this kind ought not to move us, when their
pretence to infallibility is destitute of the proper proof
and evidence of it, which is a power of miracles;
and when their doctrines and practices have neither
the evidence of reason or scripture on their side.*

For instance; *that the church of Rome is the mother
and mistress of all churches; which is one of the new
articles of pope Pius the IVth's creed; and yet there
is not one syllable in scripture tending to this pur-
pose. And in reason it cannot be, that any but that
which was the first christian church, should be the
mother of all churches; and that the church of Rome
certainly was not, and the church of Jerusalem un-
doubtedly was.*

And then, *that the bishop of Rome, as successor of
St. Peter there, is the supreme and universal pastor of
Christ's church by divine appointment, as he assumes to
himself; and that it is necessary to salvation, for every
human creature to be subject to the bishop of Rome, as is
declared in their cannon-law by a constitution of pope*

S E R M. *Boniface* the VIIIth, which constitution is confirmed in the last *Lateran* council; of all which there is not the least mention in scripture, nor any divine appointment to that purpose to be found there. And it is against reason, that all the world should be obliged to trudge to *Rome* for the decision of causes and differences, which in many, and the most weighty matters are reserved to the decision of that See, and can be determined no where else. And against reason likewise it is to found this universal supremacy in his being successor of *St. Peter*; and to fix it in the bishop of *Rome*, rather than at *Antioch*; when it is certain, and granted by themselves, that *St. Peter* was first bishop of *Antioch*, and out of all question, that he was Bishop of *Antioch*; but not so, that he was Bishop of *Rome*.

Nor is there any thing in scripture for *the deliverance of souls out of purgatory by the prayers and masses of the living*. The whole thing is groundless, and not agreeable to the constant suppositions of scripture concerning a future state. Nor is there any reason for it besides that which is not fit to be given, the wealth and profit which it brings in.

The invocation and worship of the blessed virgin, and of all the saints departed, is destitute of all scripture-warrant or example, and confessed by themselves not to have been owned or practised in the *three first* ages of the church, because it looked too like the heathen idolatry; which deserves to be well considered by those who pretend to derive their whole religion from Christ and his Apostles by a continued and uninterrupted succession. And this practice is likewise destitute of all colour of reason; unless we be assured, that they hear our prayers in all places; which we cannot be, unless they be present in all places, which they themselves do not believe; or that God doth some way or other reveal and make known to them the prayers which are made to them, which we cannot possibly be

be assured of, but by some revelation of God to that purpose; which we no where find, nor doth the church of *Rome* pretend to it.

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But I proceed to the

Second thing; namely, that we should much more *bold fast the profession of our faith* and religion, against the confidence of men, contrary to scripture and reason, and the common sense of mankind. For these are the chief grounds of certainty, which we can have for or against any thing; and if these be clearly on our side, we ought not to be much moved by the confidence of men, concerning any doctrines or practices of religion, which are plainly contrary to these. If in points wherein we have this advantage on our side, we do not *bold fast the profession* of our religion, our error and folly are capable of no excuse. And this advantage we plainly have in several points and controversies betwixt us and the church of *Rome*.

As in *the worship of images*; which is as expressly and clearly forbidden in the second commandment, and that without any distinction, as any other thing is forbidden in the whole bible. And that it is so forbidden in this commandment, and that this commandment is still in force among Christians, was the universal sense of the ancient christian church.

Prayers and the service of God in an unknown tongue, are directly contrary to the very nature and end of religious worship, which ought to be a reasonable service; which it cannot be, if it be not directed by our understandings, and accompanied with our hearts and affections: But if it be performed in an unknown tongue, our understanding can have no part in it; and if we do not understand it, it cannot move our affections. And this likewise is plainly contrary to scripture; namely, to a large discourse of *St. Paul's* almost throughout a whole *chapter*, where he purposely sets himself to shew the unprofitableness and gross absurdity of praying, or celebrating any other

SERM. part of religious worship, in an unknown tongue.

V. If any part of our religion had been half so clearly condemned in scripture, as this is, (which yet is the constant and general practice of the church of *Rome*) we must have *lain down in our shame, and confusion would have covered us*; and we must either have rejected the authority of the Bible, or have renounced that point of our religion, whatever it had been; tho' it had been dear to us as our *right hand*, and our *right eye*, we must, upon such plain evidence of scripture against it, have *cut it off, and plucked it out, and cast it from us*.

The like may be said of *locking up the scriptures from the people in an unknown tongue*; contrary to the command of the scriptures themselves, and to the great end and design of Almighty God in the writing and publishing of them; and contrary to the perpetual exhortations and councils of all the ancient fathers of the christian church for a great many ages, not one accepted: They are hardly more frequent, and copious, and earnest in any argument, than in persuading people of all ranks and conditions to the constant and careful reading of the holy scriptures: And contrary to the common reason and sense of mankind. For what should men be persuaded to be acquainted withal, if not with that which is the great instrument of our salvation? That book which was written on purpose to reveal and convey to men the knowledge of God, and of his will, and their duty? What should men be allowed to know, if not that which is the best and most effectual means to direct and bring them to heaven, or turn them from sin, and to preserve them from eternal misery? When our Saviour would represent the best and most effectual means of bringing men to happiness, and saving them from the eternal torments of hell, in the parable of the rich man and *Lazarus*, he brings in *Abraham*, giving the best advice he could to the rich

rich man who was in hell, concerning his brethren S E R M.
that were upon earth, how they might prevent their V.
coming into that place of torment; and he directs them
to the scriptures, as the best and most effectual means
to that purpose: *They have* (says he) *Moses and the*
prophets, let them hear them.

Now if in the church of God, among the *Jews*,
the same course had been taken that is now in the
church of *Rome*; the rich man might, and in all
reason ought to have replied, *nay, father Abraham,*
but they have not Moses and the prophets, nor are they per-
mitted to read them in a language that they can understand;
and therefore this advice is of no use to them: And then
he might with reason have pressed him, as he did,
that *one might be sent to them from the dead, to testify*
unto them. But it appears, that *Abraham* was very
positive and peremptory in this advice; and that he
prefers the knowledge of the scriptures to any other
way and means that could be thought of; and that
if this had not its effect to persuade men to repentance,
and to preserve them from hell, he did not know any
thing else that was so likely to do it: For he con-
cludes; *if they hear not Moses and the prophets, nei-*
ther will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.
And this is the conclusion of the parable; which
plainly shews, what was the main scope and design
of our Saviour in it; namely, to recommend to us
the use of the holy scriptures, as the best and most
effectual means which the wisdom of God hath pro-
vided for the salvation of mankind.

And now any man would be apt to think, that
the declared judgment of our Saviour in the case,
should go a great way, even with the most infallible
church in the world. However, this we must say,
that it is in truth a very hard case, to which the
church of *Rome* hath reduced men; that it will nei-
ther allow them salvation out of their church, nor the
best and most effectual means of salvation when they
are

S E R M. are in it. I might say much more upon this head ;
 V. but this I hope, may be sufficient.

~~~~~ The next instance shall be in the doctrine of *transubstantiation* ; which is contrary to the scriptures, which after consecration so frequently call the elements *bread and wine* ; and which without reason or necessity, puts an absurd and impossible sense upon those words of our Saviour, *this is my body* ; which do no more prove *transubstantiation*, than those words, *this cup is the New Testament*, do prove, that the material cup which was used in the sacrament was substantially changed into the New Testament ; and no more, than those texts which affirm God to have eyes, and ears, and hands, do prove that he really hath so. But besides the contrariety of this doctrine to scripture, nothing can be more repugnant to reason. It is so big with contradictions, and so surfeited of impossibilities, that it would be endless to reckon them up. And besides all this, it plainly contradicts the clear and constant evidence of *four* of our *five* senses ; which, whoever contradicts, undermines the foundation of all certainty.

And then *the communion in one kind* is plainly contrary to our Saviour's institution of the sacrament in both kinds, as they themselves acknowledge. And therefore the council of *Constance*, being sensible of this, was forced to decree it with an expresse *non obstante* to be the institution of Christ, and the practice of the Apostles and the primitive church. And their doctrine of *concomitancy* (as if the blood were in the flesh, and together with it) will not help the matter : Because in the sacrament Christ's body is represented as broken, and pierced, and exhausted, and drained of its blood ; and his blood is represented as shed and poured out ; so that one kind can by no means contain and exhibit both.

The next instance is, *the repetition of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice in the mass*, so often as that is celebrated : Against all reason : because the sacrifice of Christ

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Christ once offered upon the cross, was a full and perfect propitiation for the sins of the whole world; and therefore ought not, because it needs not, to be again repeated for that end, in any manner whatsoever.

And it is directly contrary to the main scope of a great part of this Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which shews the excellency of the Gospel above the Law in this respect, that the expiatory sacrifice of the Gospel was offered *once for all*; whereas the sacrifices of the law were perpetually repeated. Chap. 7. 27. speaking of Christ; *who needs not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifices; first for his own sins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.* chap. 9. 26. *But once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself: And as it is appointed for all men once to die; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* And chap. 10. 10. *By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* And ver. 12. *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* And verse 14. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* There cannot be plainer texts for any thing in the Bible, than that this propitiatory sacrifice was never to be repeated.

And whereas they say, that the *sacrifice of the mass is an unbloody sacrifice*; This, instead of bringing them off, doth but entangle the matter more. For if blood be offered in the sacrifice of the mass, how is it an unbloody sacrifice? What can be more bloody than blood? And if blood be not offered, how is it propitiatory? Since the Apostle lays it down for a certain rule, that *without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins; i. e.* There can be no propitiation for the sins of the living or the dead; which the church of *Rome* affirms there is.

I might have added one or two instances more; and then should have proceeded to shew, in the *third* place, that we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith* with-



*without wavering*, against all the temptations and terrors of the world ; which is more especially and principally here intended by the Apostle in this exhortation.

But I shall proceed no farther at present.

*The third  
Sermon on  
this text.*

## S E R M O N VI.

Of Constancy in the Profession of the true Religion.

✕

H E B. X. 23.

*Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering ; for he is faithful that promised.*

S E R M.  
VI.

**I**N these words, I have told you, are contained, *First*, An exhortation to *hold fast the profession of our faith, or hope, without wavering.*

*Secondly*, An argument or encouragement thereto ; *because he is faithful that promised.* I am yet upon the first of these ; the exhortation to Christians, to be constant and steddy in the profession of their religion : *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* And that we might the better comprehend the true and full meaning of this exhortation, I shewed,

*First, Negatively*, what is not meant and intended by it. And I mentioned these *two* particulars.

1. The Apostle doth not hereby intend, that those who are capable of enquiring into, and examining the grounds of their religion, should not have the liberty to do it. Nor,

2. That

2. That when upon due enquiry and examination, S E R M.  
men are settled, as they think and verily believe, in VI.  
the true faith and religion, they should obstinately re-  
fuse to hear any reason that can be offered against their  
present persuasion. Both these I shewed to be unrea-  
sonable, and arguments of a bad cause and religion:  
And therefore neither of them can be intended by the  
Apostle in this exhortation.

*Secondly*, I proceeded *positively* to explain the mean-  
ing of this exhortation. And to this purpose I pro-  
posed,

I. To consider *what* it is, that we are to *hold fast*,  
viz. *the confession or profession of our faith*, The anci-  
ent christian faith, of which every Christian makes  
*profession* in his baptism: For of that the Apostle here  
speaks, as appears by the context; not the doubtful  
and uncertain traditions of men, nor the impious dic-  
tates and doctrines of any church not contained in the  
holy scriptures, imposed upon the christian church;  
tho' with never so confident a pretence of the antiqui-  
ty of the doctrines proposed, or of the infallibility  
of the proposers of them. And then I proceeded in  
the

II<sup>d</sup> place, to shew, *how* we are to *hold fast the pro-  
fession of our faith without wavering*. And I menti-  
oned these following particulars, as probably implied  
in the Apostle's exhortation.

1. That we should *hold fast the profession of our faith*,  
against the confidence of men, without scripture or  
reason to support their confidence.

2. And much more against the confidence of men,  
against scripture and reason, and the common sense of  
mankind.

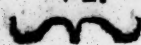
3. Against all the temptations and terrors of the  
world.

4. Against all vain promises of being put into a  
safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to  
heaven upon easier terms in another religion.

5. Against

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5. Against all the cunning arts and insinuations of busy and disputing men, whose design it is to unhinge men from their religion, and to gain profelytes to their party and faction.

1. We are to hold fast the profession of our faith, against the confidence of men, without scripture or reason to support their confidence. And of this I gave several instances. As in the pretence of the church of Rome to infallibility, without any proof or evidence of it, either by scripture or miracles: I mean such miracles, as are sufficiently attested. For as for their legends, since the wisest among themselves give no credit to them, I hope, they do not expect that we should believe them, or be moved by them. And then their pretence that *the church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all churches*; which is now made an article of their creed. And that *the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter there, is by divine appointment the supreme and universal pastor of Christ's church*. And that *it is necessary to salvation, for every human creature to be subject to him*. And lastly, *their invocation and worship of the blessed Virgin and Saints departed*; without any warrant or example of any such thing, either in scripture, or in the practice of the first ages of the christian religion; and without sufficient ground to believe that they hear the prayers which are put up to them.

2. Much more are we to hold fast the profession of our faith, against the confidence of men, contrary to scripture and reason and the common sense of mankind. And here I instanced in *the worship of images*; *the locking up of the scriptures from the people*; and *celebrating the publick prayers and service of God in an unknown tongue*; and their doctrine of *transubstantiation*; *their communion in one kind*; and their daily repetition, in the sacrifice of the mass, of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ: which was offered once for all, and is of eternal virtue and efficacy, and therefore ought



ought not, because it needs not, like *Jewish* sacrifices S E R M.  
under the law, to be repeated. VI.

To these instances, which I have already spoken to, I shall add *one or two* more; as namely, That to the due administration of the sacraments, an intention in the minister at least to do what the church does, is requisite. This is expressly defined, and under an anathema upon all that shall say otherwise, by the council of *Trent. Sess. the seventh, Can. 11th*; which is to make the validity and virtue of the sacraments to depend upon the intention of the priest or minister. So that if in the administration of baptism, he do not intend to baptize the party he pretends to baptize, then it is no baptism, and consequently the person baptized is not made a member of *Christ's* church; nor is any grace or special benefit conferred upon him; nor is he a Christian. So likewise in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, if the priest do not intend to consecrate the host, then is it no sacrament; and they that receive it, receive no benefit by it; and (which according to their opinion is a dreadful consequence) by the words of consecration, there is no change made of the elements into the body and blood of *Christ*, and consequently they that give adoration to the sacrament in such cases, worship bread and wine, for God; which is idolatry. And so likewise in their sacrament of penance, though the priest pronounce the words of absolution; yet if he do not intend to absolve the penitent; though he be never so truly penitent, and God on his part is ready to forgive him; yet if the priest do not intend to do so, there is nothing done, and the man is still in his sin. So likewise in ordination, (which is another of their sacraments) if the bishop do not intend to ordain the man, he is no priest, and all that he does as a priest afterwards, either in administration of baptism or the Lord's supper, or the absolution of penitents, all is vain, and of no effect. Nay, in marriage, (which they will needs have to be a sacrament

SER MON CRAMENT too) if the intention of the priest be wanting, there is nothing done, the contract is null'd, and they that are so married do really live in adultery, though they do not know it, nor have any suspicion of it.

Now this is contrary to scripture and the whole tenour of the Gospel, which promiseth the benefit and efficacy of the sacraments, to all those that perform the conditions of the covenant which are required on their parts, and declares forgiveness of sins to those who confess them to God, and truly repent of them.

And there is not the least intimation given in the bible, that the virtue and efficacy of the sacraments does depend upon the intention of him that administers them; or that the forgiveness of sins is suspended upon the intention or absolution of the priest; but only upon the sincere resolution of the penitent. And surely nothing can be more absurd, and contrary to reason, than that when men have performed all the conditions which the Gospel requires; yet they should notwithstanding this be deprived of all the blessings and benefits which God hath promised, and intends to confer upon them; because the priest hath not the same intention. So that when a man hath done all he can *to work out his own salvation*, he shall be never the nearer; only for want of that which is wholly out of his power; the right intention of the priest.

Besides, that after all the boasts of the safe condition of men in their church, and the most certain and infallible means of salvation to be had in it; this one principle (that the intention of the priests is necessary to the validity and virtue of the sacraments) puts the salvation of men upon the greatest hazard and uncertainty; and such as it is impossible for any man either to discover or prevent, unless he had some certain way to know the heart and intention of the priest. For upon these terms, who can know whether any man be a priest, and really ordained, or not?

not? Nay, whether he be a Christian, and have been truly baptized; or not? And consequently, whether any of his administrations be valid, and we have any benefit and advantage by them? Because all this depends upon the knowledge of that, which we neither do nor can know. SERM.  
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So that when a man hath conscientiously done all that God requires of any man to make him capable of salvation; yet without any fault of his, the want of intention in an idle minded man may frustrate all: And tho' the man have been baptized, and do truly believe the Gospel, and hath sincerely repented of his sins, and lived a most holy life; yet all this may signify nothing, and after all he may be no Christian; because his baptism was invalid: And all the promises of God to the means of salvation which his goodness and wisdom hath prescribed, may be of no efficacy; if the priest do not intend in the administration of the sacraments to do that which God and the church intend.

Now if this be true, there is certainly no church in the world, in which the salvation of men runs so many hazards; and yet all this hazard and uncertainty has its rise from a scholastical point, which is directly contrary to all the notions of mankind concerning the goodness of God, and to clear the reason of the thing, and to the constant tenour of the Gospel; and which was never asserted by any of the ancient fathers; much less defined by any council before that of *Trent*: So that it is a doctrine new and needless, and in the necessary consequences of it unreasonable and absurd to the utmost degree.

The last instance I shall mention, is *their rule of faith*. The rule of faith universally received and acknowledged by the christian church in all ages, before the council of *Trent*, was the word of God, contained in the canonical books of holy scripture; which were therefore by the church called *canonical*, because they were the rule of faith and manners, of



S E R M. the doctrines to be believed, and the duties to be practised by all Christians. But when the errors and corruptions of the *Romish* church were grown to the height, and the Pope and his council at *Trent* were resolved not to retrench and reform them, they saw it necessary to enlarge and lengthen out their rule; because the ancient rule of the holy scriptures would by no means reach several of the doctrines and practices of that church, which they were resolved to maintain and make good by one means or other: As namely, the doctrine of *transubstantiation* of *purgatory*; and of *the seven sacraments*: And the practice of *the worship of Saints, and images*; of *the scriptures, and the service of God, in an unknown tongue*; of *indulgences*; and *the communion in one kind*; and several other superstitious practices in use among them.

Now to enlarge the rule to the best advantage for the justification of these doctrines and practices, they took these *two* ways.

*First*, They have added to the *canonical* books of the Old Testament, which were received by the *Jewish* church (to whom were committed the Oracles of God) I say, to these they have added several *Apo-cryphal* books, not warranted by divine inspiration, because they were written after prophecy and divine inspiration was ceased in the *Jewish* church; *Malachi* being the last of their prophets, according to the general tradition of that church. But because the addition of these books did not make a rule of faith and practice large enough for their purpose; in imitation of the *Jews*, in the time of the greatest confusion and degeneracy of that church, they added in the

*Second* place to their books of scripture, which they call *the written Word*, an *unwritten Word*, which they call *Oral Tradition* from Christ and his Apostles; which they declare to be of equal authority with the holy scriptures themselves; and that it ought to be received with the same pious veneration and affection: Of which traditions, they being the keepers and judges,

judges, they may extend them to what they please, and having them in their own breasts, they may declare whatever they have a mind to, to have been a constant and universal tradition of their church; tho' it is evident to common sense, that nothing can be more uncertain, and more liable to alteration and mistake, than *tradition*, at the distance of so many ages, brought down by word of mouth, without writing, and passing thro' so many hands. He that can think these to be of equal certainty and authority with what is delivered by writing, and brought down by books, undertakes the defence of a strange paradox, viz. That *general rumour and report of things said and done fifteen hundred years ago, is of equal authority and credit with a record, and a written history.*

By which proceeding of the council of *Trent*, concerning the rule of faith and practice, it is very evident, that they had no mind to bring their faith to the ancient rule, the holy scriptures. That they knew could not be done; and therefore they were resolved to fit their rule to their faith. And this foundation being laid in their first decree, all the rest would afterwards go on very smoothly. For do but give men the making of their rule, and they can make good any thing by it. And accordingly, the council of *Trent* having thus fixt and fitted a rule to their own purpose; in the conclusion of that decree, they give the world fair warning, upon what grounds, and in what ways they intend to proceed in their following decrees of practice and definitions of faith. *Omnes itaque intelligant, quo ordine & via ipsa Synodus post jactum fidei confessionis fundamentum sit progressura, &c.* Be it known therefore to all men, in what order and way the synod, after having laid this foundation of the confession of faith, will proceed; and what testimonies and proofs she chiefly intends to make use of, for the confirmation of doctrines, and reformation of manners in the church. And no doubt, all men do

S E R M. see very plainly to what purpose this foundation is  
 VI. laid of so large a rule of faith. And this being ad-  
 mitted, how easy is it for them to confirm and prove  
 whatever doctrines and practices they have a mind  
 to establish.

But if this be a *new*, and *another foundation*, than  
*that* which the great author and founder of our re-  
 ligion hath laid and built his church upon, (*viz.*) *the*  
*foundation of the Prophets and Apostles*; it is no matter  
 what they build upon it. And if they go about to  
 prove any thing by the new parts of this rule; by  
 the *Apocryphal* books which they have added to the  
 ancient *Canon* of the scriptures, brought down to us  
 by the general tradition of the christian church; and  
 by their pretended unwritten traditions: We do with  
 reason reject this kind of proof, and desire them first  
 to prove their *rule*, before they pretend to prove any  
 thing by it: For we protest against this rule, as  
 never declared and owned by the christian church,  
 nor proceeded upon by the ancient fathers of the  
 church, nor by any council whatsoever, before the  
 council of *Trent*.

In vain then doth the church of *Rome* vaunt it self  
 of the antiquity of their faith and religion, when the  
 very foundation and rule of it is but of yesterday; a  
 new thing never before known or heard of in the  
 christian world: Whereas the foundation and rule of  
 our religion is the word of God, contained in the  
 holy scriptures; to which Christians in all ages have  
 appealed, as the *only rule* of faith and life.

I proceed now to the

*Third* thing I proposed, *viz.* That we are *to hold*  
*fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, against  
 all the temptations and terrors of the world. And  
 this seems more especially and principally to be here  
 intended by the Apostle in this exhortation.

I shall first speak of the temptations of the world.  
 And they are chiefly these *two*: The temptation of  
*fashion*



*fashion and example; and of worldly interest and advantage.* SERM.  
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I. Of *fashion and example*. This in truth and reality, is no strong argument; and yet in experience and effect it is often found to be very powerful. It is frequently seen, that this hath many times too great an influence upon weak and foolish minds. Men are apt to be carried down with the stream, and to follow a multitude in that which is evil: But more especially men are prone to be swayed by great examples, and to bend themselves to such an obsequiousness to their superiors and betters, that, in compliance with them, they are ready not only to change their affection to persons and things as *they* do, but even their judgment also; and that in the greatest and weightiest matters, even in matters of religion, and the great concerns of another world. But this surely is an argument of a poor and mean spirit, and of a weak understanding, which leans upon the judgment of another, and is in truth the lowest degree of servility, that a reasonable creature can stoop to; and even beneath that of a slave, who, in the midst of his chains and fetters, doth still retain the freedom of his mind and judgment.

But I need not to urge this upon considerate persons, who know better how to value their duty and obligation to God, than to be tempted to do any thing contrary thereto, merely in compliance with *fashion and example*. There are some things in religion so very plain, that a wise and good man would stand alone in the belief and practice of them, and not be moved in the least by the contrary example of the whole world. It was a brave resolution of *Joshua*; though all men should forsake the God of *Israel*, and run aside to other gods, yet he would not do it, *Joshua* 24. 15. *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom ye will serve: But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* It was well resolved of *Peter*, if he had not been

SERM. too confident of his own strength, when he said to  
 VI. our Saviour, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will*  
 not I.

2. Another sort of temptation, and which is commonly more powerful than *example*, is *worldly interest and advantage*. This is a mighty bait to a great part of mankind, and apt to work very strongly upon the necessities of some, and upon the covetousness and ambition of others. Some men are tempted by necessity, which many times makes them do ugly and reproachful things, and like *Esau*, for a morsel of meat to sell their birth-right and blessing. Covetousness tempts others to be of that religion which gives them the prospect of the greatest earthly advantage, either for the increasing or securing of their estates. When they find, that they cannot serve God and Mammon, they will forsake the one and cleave to the other. This was one of the great temptations to many in the primitive times, and a frequent cause of apostacy from the faith; an eager desire of riches, and too great a value for them; as St. Paul observes, 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. *But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted after, they have erred, or been seduced from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* This was the temptation which drew off Demas from his religion; as St. Paul tells us, 2 Tim. 4. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*

Ambition is likewise a great temptation to proud and aspiring minds, and makes many men false to their religion, when they find it a hindrance to their preferment; and they are easily persuaded, that that is the best religion, which is attended with the greatest worldly advantages, and will raise them to the highest dignity. The devil understood very well the force of this temptation, when he set upon our Saviour, and

and therefore reserved it for the last assault. *He shew-* S E R M.  
*ed him all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of* VI.  
*them; and said to him, All this will I give thee, if thou*  
*wilt fall down and worship me.* And when he saw  
 this would not prevail, he gave him over in despair,  
 and left him. But though this be a very dazling  
 temptation, yet there are considerations of that weight  
 to be set over-against it, from the nature of religion,  
 and the infinite concernment of it to our immortal  
 souls, as is sufficient *to quench this fiery dart of the devil,*  
 and to put all the temptations of this world out of  
 countenance, and to render all the riches and glory  
 of it, in comparison of the eternal happiness and  
 misery of the other world, *but as the very small dust*  
*upon the balance.* What temptation of this world can  
 stand against that argument of our Saviour, if it be  
 seriously weighed and considered; *What is a man*  
*profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own*  
*soul: or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*  
 If we would consider things impartially, and weigh  
 them in a just and equal balance; the things which  
 concern our bodies, and this present life, are of no  
 consideration, in comparison of the great and vast  
 concernment of our immortal souls, and the happy  
 or miserable condition of our bodies and souls to all  
 eternity.

And religion is a matter of this vast concernment;  
 and therefore not to be bargained away and parted  
 with by us for the greatest things this world can offer.  
 There is no greater sign of a sordid spirit, than to  
 put a high value upon things of little worth; and no  
 greater mark of folly, than to make an equal bar-  
 gain, to part with things of greatest price, for a  
 slender and trifling consideration: As if a man of  
 great fortune and estate, should sell the inheritance of  
 it for a picture, which, when he hath it, will not  
 perhaps yield so much as will maintain him for one  
 year. The folly is so much the greater in things of  
 infinitely greater value; as for a man to quit God



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and religion, to sell the truth and his soul, and to part with his everlasting inheritance for a convenient service, for a good customer, and some present advantage in his trade and profession, or indeed for any condition which the foolish language of this world calls a *high place*, or a *great preferment*. The things which these men part with upon these cheap terms, God, and his truth, and religion, are, to those who understand themselves, and the just value of their immortal souls, things of inestimable worth, and not to be parted with by a considerate man for any price that this world can bid. And those who are to be bought out of their religion upon such low terms, and so easily parted from it, 'tis much to be feared that they have little or no religion to *hold fast*.

*Secondly*, As we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, against the temptations and allurements of this world; so likewise against the terrors of it.

*Fear* is a passion of great force; and, if men be not very resolute and constant, will be apt to stagger them, and to move them from their *steadfastness*: And therefore when the case of suffering and persecution for the truth happens, we had need to *hold fast the profession of our faith*. Our Saviour in the parable of the sower, tells us, that there were many that heard the word, and with joy received it: but when persecution and tribulation arose because of the word, presently they were offended.

And though, blessed be God, this be not our case; yet there was a time when it was the general case of Christians, in the first beginning of Christianity, and for several ages after, though with some intermission and intervals of ease. It was then a general rule, and the common expectation of Christians, that *through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of God*, and that, if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution. And in several

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veral ages since those primitive times, the sincere professors of religion have, in divers places, been exposed to most grievous sufferings and persecutions for the truth. And even at this day, in several places, the faithful servants of God are exercised with the sharpest and forest trials that perhaps were ever heard of in any age ; and for the sake of God, and the constant profession of his true religion, are *tormented and killed all the day long, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* It is their hard lot to be called to these cruel and bitter sufferings, and our happy opportunity to be called upon for their relief ; those of them, I mean, that have escaped that terrible storm and tempest, and have taken refuge and sanctuary here among us, and, out of his majesty's great humanity and goodness, are by his publick letters recommended to the charity of the whole nation, by the name of *distressed protestants.*

Let us consider, how much easier our lot and our duty is, than theirs ; as much as it is easier to compassionate the sufferings, and to relieve the distresses of others, than to be such sufferers, and in such distress ourselves. Let us make their case our own, and then we ourselves will be the best judges, how it is fit for us to demean ourselves towards them, and to what degree we ought to extend our charity and compassion to them. Let us put on their case and circumstances, and suppose that we were the sufferers, and had fled to them for refuge : The same pity and commiseration, the same tender regard and consideration of our sad case, the same liberal and effectual relief, that we should desire and expect, and be glad to have shewn and afforded to ourselves, let us give to them ; and then, I am sure, they will want no fitting comfort and support from us.

We enjoy (blessed be the goodness of God to us) great peace and plenty, and freedom from evil and suffering : And surely one of the best means to have these blessings continued to us, and our *tranquillity prolonged,*

SERM. *prolonged*, is to consider and relieve those who want the blessings, which we enjoy, and the readiest way to provoke God, to deprive us of those blessings, is to *shut up the bowels of our compassion from our distressed brethren*. God can easily change the scene, and make our sufferings, if not in the same kind, yet in one kind or other, equal to theirs ; and then we shall *remember the afflictions of Joseph*, and say, as his brethren did, when they fell into trouble, *we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us*.

God alone knows, what storms the devil may yet raise in the world, before the end of it : And therefore it concerns all Christians, in all times and places, who have taken upon them the profession of Christ's religion, to consider well before-hand, and to calculate the dangers and sufferings it may expose them to, and to arm ourselves with resolution and patience against the fiercest assaults of temptation ; considering the shortness of all temporal afflictions and sufferings, in comparison of the eternal and glorious reward of them ; and the lightness of them too, in comparison of the endless and intolerable torments of another world ; to which every man exposeth himself, who forsakes God, and renounceth his truth, and wounds his conscience, to avoid temporal sufferings.

And though *fear*, in many cases, especially if it be of death and extreme sufferings, be a great excuse for several actions, because it may, *cadere in constantem virum*, happen to a resolute man : Yet in this case of renouncing our religion (unless it be very sudden and surprizing, out of which a man recovers himself when he comes to himself, as St. Peter did ; or the suffering be so extreme, as to put a man besides himself for the time, so as to make him say or do any thing ; ) I say in this case of renouncing God and his truth, God will not admit *fear* for a just excuse of our apostasy ; which, if it be unrepented of (and the scripture speaks

of



of repentance in that case as very difficult) will be our ruin. And the reason is, because God has given us such fair warning of it, that we may be prepared for it, in the resolution of our minds : And we enter into religion upon these terms, with a professed expectation of suffering, and a firm purpose to lay down our lives for the truth, if God shall call us to it. *If any man will be my disciple, says our Lord, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me : And again, he that loveth life itself more than me, is not worthy of me ; And if any man be ashamed of me and of my words, in this unfaithful generation, of him will I be ashamed before my father and the holy angels.*

And therefore to master and subdue this fear, our Saviour hath propounded great objects of terror to us, and a danger infinitely more to be dreaded, which every man runs himself wilfully upon, who shall quit the profession of his religion, to avoid temporal sufferings ; *Luke 12. 4, 5. Fear not them that can kill the body, but after that have nothing that they can do : But I will tell you whom you shall fear. Fear him, who, after he hath killed, can destroy both body and soul in hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* And to this dreadful hazard every man exposeth himself, who, for the fear of men, ventures thus to offend God. These are *the fearful and unbelievers* spoken of by St. John, *who shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Thus you see, how we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, against all temptations and terrors of this world. I should now have proceeded to the next particular ; namely, that we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith*, against all vain promises of being put into a safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to heaven upon easier terms, in some other church and religion.

But this I shall not now enter upon.

The fourth  
Sermon on  
this text.

# S E R M O N VII.

Of Constancy in the Profession of the  
true Religion.

X HEB. X. 23.

*Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.*

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**I**N these words, I have told you, are contained these *two* parts :

*First*, An exhortation to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

*Secondly*, An argument or encouragement thereto ; *because he is faithful that promised.* I am yet upon the

*First* of these ; The exhortation to Christians to be constant and steddy in the profession of their religion : *let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* And that we might the better comprehend the true and full meaning of this exhortation, I shewed,

I. *Negatively*, What is not meant and intended by it ; and I mentioned these *two* particulars.

1. The Apostle doth not hereby intend, that those who are capable of enquiring into, and examining the grounds and reasons of their religion, should not have the liberty to do it. Nor,

2. That when upon due enquiry and examination, men are settled, as they think and verily believe, in the true faith and religion, they should obstinately refuse to hear any reason that can be offered against their

their present persuasion: For reason, when it is fairly offered, is always to be heard. I proceeded in the

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II. Place, *Positively*, To explain the meaning of this exhortation: And to this purpose I proposed to consider,

*First*, *What* it is that we are to hold fast; viz. *the confession or profession of our faith*; the ancient christian faith, which every Christian makes profession of in his baptism: Not the doubtful and uncertain traditions of men, nor the imperious dictates and doctrines of any church (which are not contained in the holy scriptures) imposed upon the christian world, tho' with never so confident a pretence of the antiquity of the doctrines, or of the infallibility of the proposers of them. And then I proceeded, in the

*Second* place, to shew, *how* we are to hold fast *the profession of our faith without wavering*; and I mentioned these following particulars, as probably implied and comprehended in the Apostle's exhortation.

1. That we should *hold fast the profession of our faith* against the confidence of men, without scripture or reason to support that confidence.

2. And much more against the confidence of men, contrary to plain scripture, and reason, and the common sense of mankind; under both which heads I gave several instances of doctrines and practices imposed with great confidence upon the world, some without, and others plainly against scripture, and reason, and the common sense of mankind.

3. Against all the temptations and terrors of the world; the temptations of fashion and example, and of worldly interest and advantage; and against the terrors of persecution and suffering for the truth. Thus far I have gone; I shall now proceed to the *two* other particulars, which remain to be spoken to.

4. We are to *hold fast the profession of our faith*, against all vain promises of being put into a safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to heaven upon easier terms, in some other church and religion.

God



S E R M. God hath plainly declared to us in the holy scriptures,  
 VII.  upon what terms and conditions we may obtain eternal life and happiness, and what will certainly exclude us from it; That, *except we repent, (i. e.)* without true contrition for our sins, and forsaking of them, *we shall perish*; That *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; that *no fornicator, or adulterer, or idolater, or covetous person nor any one that lives in the practice of such sins, shall have any inheritance in the kingdom of God or Christ*. There is as great and unpassable a gulf fixt between heaven and a wicked man, as there is betwixt heaven and hell. And when men have done all they can to debauch and corrupt the christian doctrine, it is impossible to reconcile a wicked life with any reasonable and well-grounded hopes of happiness in another world. No church hath that privilege, to save a man upon any other terms, than those which our blessed Saviour hath declared in his Gospel. All religions are equal in this, that a bad man can be saved in none of them.

The church of *Rome* pretends their church and religion to be the only safe and sure way to salvation; and yet, if their doctrine be true, concerning the intention of the priest (and if it be not, they are much to blame in making it an article of their faith) I say, if it be true, that the intention of the priest is necessary to the validity and virtue of the sacraments; then there is no religion in the world, that runs the salvation of men upon more and greater hazards and uncertainties, and such as by no care and diligence of man in *working out his own salvation*, are to be avoided and prevented.

As for the easier terms of salvation which they offer to men, they signify nothing, if they be not able to make them good; which no man can reasonably believe they can do, that hath read the Bible, and doth in any good measure understand the nature of God, and the design of religion. For instance; that after the long course of a most lewd and flagiti-

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ous life, a man may be reconciled to God, and have S E R M.  
his sins forgiven at the last gasp, upon confession of VII.  
them to the priest, with that imperfect degree of con-  
trition for them, which they call *attrition*, together  
with the absolution of the priest.

Now *attrition* is a trouble for sin, merely for fear of the punishment of it. And this, together with *confession*, and the *absolution* of the priest, without any hatred of sin for the evil and contrariety of it to the holy nature and law of God, and without the least spark of love to God, will do the sinner's business, and put him into a state of grace and salvation, without any other grace or disposition for salvation, but only the fear of hell and damnation. This, I confess, is easy : But the great difficulty is, to believe it to be true. And certainly, no man, that ever seriously considered the nature of God and religion, can ever be persuaded to build the hopes of his salvation upon such a *quick-sand*. The absolution of all the priests in the world will not procure the forgiveness of God for any man, that is not disposed for his mercy by such a repentance, as the Gospel requires ; which, I am sure, is very different from that which is required by the council of *Trent*.

They that offer heaven to men upon so very large and loose terms, give great cause to suspect, that they will never make good their offer ; the terms are so unreasonably cheap and easy, that there must be some fraud and false dealing. And on the other hand, nothing ought to recommend our religion more to a wise and considerate man, than that the terms of salvation which we propose to men, *viz.* faith, and repentance, and a sincere obedience to the precepts of the Gospel, manifested in the tenour of a holy and virtuous life, are not only perfectly agreeable to the plain and constant declaration of holy scripture ; but do likewise naturally tend to engage men most effectually to a good life, and thereby to make them *meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*

SERM. *light.* And therefore every body ought to be afraid  
 VII. of a religion, which makes such lavish offers of sal-  
 vation, and to take heed how he ventures his soul  
 upon them. For if, after all the hopes that are given  
 of salvation upon such and such terms, the sinner doth  
 really miscarry and miss of heaven; it is but very ill  
 comfort to him to be put into a *fool's paradise*, for a  
 minute or two before he leaves the world, and the  
 next moment after to find himself in the place of tor-  
 ments. I proceed to the

5th, and last particular I mentioned, as implied in  
 the exhortation here in the text, viz. that we should  
*hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering,*  
 against all the cunning arts and insinuations of busy  
 and disputing men, whose design it is to unhinge men  
 from their religion, and to gain proselytes to their  
 party and faction. To this purpose there are several  
 cautions given by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles,  
*Matth. 24. 4. Take heed, that no man deceive you;*  
*for many shall come in my name, and shall deceive many.*  
*Eph. 4. 14. That ye henceforth be no more children,*  
*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of*  
*doctrine, by the sleight of men;* ἐν τῇ αὐβρίᾳ; (the word  
 signifies the cunning of gamesters at dice; by the  
 sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness whereby they  
 lye in wait to deceive. And chap. 5. 6. *Let no man*  
*deceive you with vain words.* Col. 2. 8. *Beware, lest*  
*any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit;*  
 that is, by sophistry and vain reasoning, under a pre-  
 tence of philosophy. Heb. 13. 9. *Be not carried about*  
*with divers and strange doctrines.* 2 Pet. 3. 17. *Be-*  
*ware, lest you also, being led away with the error of*  
*the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.* And this  
 caution is enforced by an express prediction of a great  
 apostasy, which should happen in the christian church,  
 by which many should be seduced, by pretence of  
 miracles, and by several arts of deceit and falshood.  
 This apostasy St. Paul expressly foretels, 2. Thes. 2.  
 1, 2, 3. *We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our*  
 Lord



Lord Jesus Christ, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, *S E R M.*  
or be troubled, neither by spirit, (that is, by pretence *VII.*  
to inspiration) nor by word, (or message) nor by letter   
as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no  
man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not  
come, except there come a falling away, and that man  
of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. And after a  
particular description of him, he adds, v. 9. *Whose*  
*coming is after the working of Satan, with all power,*  
*and signs, and lying wonders, and in all deceitfulness of*  
*of unrighteousness in them that perish.* From all which  
he concludes, v. 15. *Therefore, brethren, stand fast.*

The particular nature and kind of this apostasy the  
same Apostle describes more fully, 1. Tim. 4. 1, 2, 3.  
*Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times*  
*some shall apostatize from the faith, giving heed to seduc-*  
*ing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypo-*  
*crisy, (i. e. under a great pretence of sanctity, spread-*  
*ing their pernicious errors) forbidding to marry, and*  
*commanding to abstain from meats.* This is a very  
lively and pat description of that great apostasy in the  
christian church, which began in the western part of  
it, and hath spread itself far and wide. For there the  
spirit of error and falshood has prevailed, under an  
hypocritical pretence of their being the only true  
church and true christians in the world. There mar-  
riage, and several sorts of meats, are forbidden to  
several ranks and orders of men. All the difficulty  
is, what is here meant by *doctrines of devils*; and  
these certainly can be no other than doctrines tending  
to idolatry, which the scripture every where doth in a  
particular manner ascribe to the devil, as the inventor  
and great promoter of it. And this is very much  
confirmed by what we find added in some ancient  
Greek copies in this text, which runs thus: *In the*  
*latter times some shall apostatize from the faith; for*  
*they shall worship the dead, as some also in Israel wor-*  
*shipped.* And then it follows, *giving heed to seducing*  
*spirits, and doctrines of devils.* So that the particular

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kind of idolatry, into which some part of the christian church should apostatize, is here pointed at; that they should worship souls departed, or the spirits of dead men; which was part of the heathen idolatry, into which the people of *Israel* did frequently relapse. So that the Spirit of God doth here foretel such an *apostasy* in some part of the christian church, as the people of *Israel* were guilty of, in falling into the heathen idolatry. *They shall be worshippers of the dead, as the Israelites also were.*

And this is *the great and dangerous seduction* which the Christians are so much cautioned against in the New Testament, and charged to *hold fast the profession of the faith* against the cunning arts and insinuations of seducing spirits; not but (as I said before) that we are always to have an ear open to reason, and to be ready to hearken and to yield to that, whenever it is fairly proposed: But to be over-reached and rooked out of ones religion, by little sophistical arts and tricks, is childish and silly. After we are, upon due tryal and examination of the grounds of our religion, settled and established in it, we ought not to suffer ourselves to be removed from it, by the groundless pretences of confident people to *infallibility*, and to be practis'd upon by *cunning men, who lie at catch* to make profelytes to their party. This is to be *like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*

And we ought to be the more careful of ourselves; because there never was any time wherein seducing spirits were more bold and busy to pervert men from the truth. Against these we should *hold fast* our religion, as a man would do his money in a crowd. It passeth in the world for a great mark of folly, when *a man and his money are soon parted*: But it is a sign of much greater folly, for a man easily to quit his religion; especially to be caught by some such gross methods, as the seducers I am speaking of, commonly use, and which lie so very open to suspicion;

suspicion; such as ill-designing men are wont to practise upon a young heir, when they have insinuated themselves into his company, to make a prey of him. They charge him to tell no body in what company he hath been; nor to ask the counsel and advice of his friends concerning what they have been persuading him to; because they for their own interest will be sure to dissuade him from it. Just thus do these seducers practise upon weak people. They charge them not to acquaint their minister, with whom they have been; nor what discourse they have had about religion; nor what books have been put into their hands; because then, all their kind design and intention towards them will be defeated. But above all, they must be sure to read no books on the other side, because they are no competent judges of points of faith; and this reading on both sides will rather confound than clear their understandings. They tell them, that they have stated the matter truly, and would not for all the world deceive them; and they may easily perceive, by their earnest application to them, that nothing but charity and a passionate desire of the salvation of their souls makes them take all these pains with them. But this is so gross a way of proceeding, that any man of common understanding must needs discern by this kind treatment, that these men can have no honest design upon them.

To come then to a more particular consideration of the arts and methods which they use, (I mean particularly those of the church of *Rome*) in making profelytes to their religion: As,

1. In allowing them to be very competent and sufficient judges for themselves, in the choice of their church and religion, (that is, which is the true church and religion, in which alone salvation is to be had) and yet telling them at the same time, that they are utterly incapable of judging of particular doctrines, and points of faith and practice; but for these they



S E R M. must rely upon the judgment of an infallible church,  
 VII. when they are in it; otherwise they will certainly  
 run into damnable errors and mistakes about these things.

And they must of necessity allow them to be sufficient judges for themselves in the choice of their religion; as will be evident, by considering in what method they proceed with their intended profelyte.

They propose to him to change his church and his religion, because he is in the wrong; and they will shew him a better, and such a one as is the only true one, and in which alone salvation is to be had. To persuade him hereto, they offer him some reasons and arguments, or give him books to read, containing arguments to move him to make this change, to satisfy him of the reasonableness, and to convince him of the necessity of it.

Now by this way of proceeding (and they can take no other) they do, whether they will or no, make the person, whom they are endeavouring to convert, a judge for himself, which church and religion is best; that which they would have him embrace and come over to, or that which they would persuade him to forsake. For to what end else do they offer him reasons and arguments to persuade him to leave our church, and to come over to theirs; but that he may consider the force and weight of them; and having considered them, may judge whether they be of force sufficient to over-rule him to make this change? So that as unwilling as they are to make particular persons judge for themselves about points of faith, and about the sense of scripture confirming those points, (because this is to leave every man to his own private spirit and fancy and giddy brain) yet they are compelled by necessity, and against their own principles, to allow a man in this case of chusing his religion, to be a judge of the reasons and arguments which they offer to induce him thereunto. So that, whether they will or no, they

they must permit him to be a judge for himself for *this once*, but not to make a practice of it, or to pretend this privilege ever after; for in acknowledgment of this great favour, of being permitted to judge for himself *this once* (which they do unwillingly grant him, and upon mere necessity) he is for ever after to resign up his judgment to the church. And though this liberty be allowed *pro hac vice*, and properly to *serve a turn*, i. e. in order to the changing of his religion; yet he is to understand, that he is no fit and competent judge of particular points of faith; these he must all learn from the true church when he is in it, and take them upon her authority, and in so doing he shall do very prudently, because she is infallible, and cannot be deceived; but he may.

But is there any sense in all this, that a man should be very fit and able to judge of that which they esteem the main and fundamental point of all, namely, which is the true church and religion; and of the reasons and arguments whereby they pretend to demonstrate it; and of the true meaning of those texts of scripture whereby they pretend to prove theirs to be the only true church: And yet should be wholly unable to judge of particular points of faith; or of the true sense of any texts of scripture that can be produced for the proof of those points?

Is it so very prudent, in all the particular points of faith, for a man to rely upon the judgment of the church, because she is infallible; and not to trust his own judgment about them, because he is fallible, and may be deceived? And is it prudent likewise for this man to trust his own judgment in the main business of all; namely, which is the true church and religion; concerning which he is as fallible in his judgment, and as liable to be deceived, as in the particular points? And if he be mistaken in the main point, they must grant his mistake to be fatal; because his sincerity, as to all the rest, depends upon it.

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This is a great mystery and riddle, that every particular man should have so sufficient a judgment as to this main and fundamental business, which is the true church and religion; and should have no judgment at all about particular points, fit to be trusted and relied upon: As if there were a certain judgment and prudence, *quoad hoc*; and if all mens understanding were so framed, as to be very judicious and discerning in this main point of religion; but to be weak and dangerous, and blind, as to all particular points: Or, as if a man might have a very good judgment, and be fit to be trusted and relied upon, before he come into their church; but from the very moment he enters into it, his judgment were quite lost and good for nothing: For this in effect and by interpretation they say, when they allow a man to be very able to judge which is the true church and religion; but so soon as he hath discovered and embraced that, to have no judgment of his own afterwards of any point of religion whatsoever; and a very tempting argument it is to any man that hath judgment, to enter into that church.

2. Another art they use with their intended proselyte, in order to his making a right choice of his religion, is to caution him, to hear and read only the arguments and books which are on one side. But now admitting their designed proselyte to be just such a judge, and so far they will allow him to be, and no farther, *viz.* which is the true church; but to have no fitness and ability at all to judge of particular points of faith: Yet methinks, they put a very odd condition, and untoward restraint upon this judge, in telling him, (as they certainly use to do those whom they would pervert) that he must have no discourse, nor read any books, but only on that side which they would gain him to; because that is the way to perplex and confound him, so that he shall never be able to come to a clear judgment and resolution in the matter. But will any man admit this way



way of proceeding in a temporal case? This is just S E R M. as if in a cause of the greatest consequence, the coun- VII. sel on one side should go about to persuade the judge, that it is only fit to hear what he hath to say in the case; that he will open it very plainly, and state the matter in difference so clearly and impartially, and bring such strong reasons and proofs for what he says, that he shall not need to hear any thing on the other side, but may proceed to judgment without any more ado: But if, when the matter is thus laid before him so plainly, and is even ripe for judgment, he will trouble himself needlessly to hear the other side; this will cast them back where they first began, and bring the matter to an endless wrangling, and so confound and puzzle his understanding, that he shall never be able to pass any clear judgment in the cause.

What, think we, would a judge say to such a bold and senseless pleader? The case is the same, and the absurdity every whit as gross and palpable, in pressing any man to make a judgment in a matter which infinitely more concerns him, upon hearing only the reasons and arguments on one side.

3. Another art which they use in making professytes, is to possess them, that there is but one thing that they are mainly concerned to enquire into, and that is this; since there is but one true catholick church of Christ upon earth, out of which there is no salvation to be had; Which that true church is? And when they have found that out, that will teach them in a most infallible way the true faith and religion, and all things that are necessary to be believed or done by them, in order to their salvation; so that they have nothing to do, but to satisfy themselves in this single enquiry, which is the true catholick church of Christ? This is the *unum necessarium*, the one thing necessary; and when they have found out this, and are satisfied about it, they need to enquire no farther; this church will fully instruct and satisfy

SERM. them in all other things. And this I cannot deny  
 VII. to be a very artificial way of proceeding, and to  
 serve their purpose very well; for they have these  
 two great advantages by it.

1. That it makes the work short, and saves them a great deal of labour, by bringing the whole business to one single enquiry: And when they have gained this point, that this single question is all that they need to be satisfied in; then they have nothing to do, but to ply and puzzle the man with their motives of credibility, and marks of the true church; and to shew, as well as they can, how these marks agree to their church, and are all to be found in it, and in no other; and to set out to the best advantage the glorious privileges of their church, the miraculous things that have been, and are still daily done in it, and the innumerable multitude of their saints and martyrs; and if these general things take and sink into them, their work is in effect done.

2. Another great advantage they have by it, is, that by bringing them to this method, they divert and keep them off from the many objections against their church and religion, namely, the errors and corruptions which we charge them withal. For this is the thing they are afraid of, and will, by no means be brought to; to vindicate and make good their innovations in faith and practice, so plainly in many things contrary to scripture, and to the faith and practice of the primitive church; as the doctrines of *transubstantiation*, of *purgatory*, the *Pope's supremacy*, of *the infallibility of their church*, of their *seven sacraments* instituted by Christ, and of *the intention of the priest* being necessary to the validity and virtue of the sacraments. And then several of their practices; as of the *worship of images*, of *the invocation of angels and saints*, of the *service of God*, and *the scriptures in an unknown tongue*, and the *communion in one kind*; and several other things, so plainly contrary to the scriptures, and the practice and usage of the primitive church,

church, that almost the meanest capacity may easily S E R M.  
be made sensible and convinced of it. These are VII.  
fore places, which they desire not to have touched, and therefore they use all possible artifice to keep men at a distance from them; partly, because the particular discussion of them is tedious, and it requires more than ordinary skill, to say any thing that is tenable for them, and so to paint and varnish them over, as to hide the corruptions and deformities of them; but chiefly because they are conscious to themselves, that as in all these points they are upon the defensive, so they are also upon very great disadvantages; and therefore to avoid, if it be possible, being troubled with them, they have devised this shorter, and easier, and more convenient way of making profelytes.

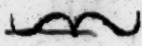
Not that they are always able to keep themselves thus within their trenches; but are sometimes, whether they will, or no, drawn out to encounter some of these objections: But they rid themselves of them as soon, and as dexterously as they can, by telling those that make them, that they will hereafter give them full satisfaction to all these matters, when they are gotten over the first and main enquiry, Which is the true church? For if they can keep them to this point, and gain them to it, they can deal with them more easily in the rest: For when they can once swallow this principle, that the church of *Rome* is the one true catholick church, and consequently, as they have told them all along, infallible; this infallibility of the church once entertained, will cover a multitude of particular errors and mistakes; and will very much help to cure the weakness and defects of some particular doctrines and practices, and at last to silence and overrule all objections against them. So that the benefit and advantage of this method is visibly and at first sight very great; and therefore no wonder, they are so steddily and constant to it, and do so obstinately insist upon it. But how convenient soever it be to them,  
it



S E R M. it is, I am sure, very unreasonable in itself; and that  
 VII. upon these accounts.

1. Because the true church doth not constitute and make the true christian faith and doctrine; but it is the true christian faith and doctrine, the profession whereof makes the true church; and therefore, in reason and order of nature, the first enquiry must be, what is the true faith and doctrine of Christ; which by him was delivered to the Apostles, and by them published and made known to the world, and by their writings transmitted and conveyed down to us? And this being found, every society of Christians which holds this doctrine, is a true part of the catholick church; and all the Christians throughout the world that agree in this doctrine, are the one true catholick church.

2. The enquiry about the true church can have no issue, even according to their own way of proceeding, without a due examination of the particular doctrines and practices of that church, the communion whereof they would persuade a man to embrace. We will admit at present this to be the first enquiry, which is the true church? Let us now see in what way they manage this, to gain men over to their church. They tell them that the church of *Rome* is the one true catholick church of Christ. The truth of this assertion we will particularly examine afterwards, when we come to consider the next step of their method in dealing with their converts. At present I shall only take notice in the general, what way they take to prove this assertion; namely, that the church of *Rome* is the one true catholick church; and that is, by the notes and marks of the true church, which they call their *motives of credibility*; because by these they design to persuade them, that the church of *Rome* is the one true catholick church. I shall not now reckon up all the notes and marks which they give of the true church; but only observe, that one of their principal marks of the true church is this; that

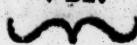
that the faith and doctrine of it be agreeable to the S E R M.  
doctrine of the primitive and apostolick church, (*i. e.*) VII.  
to the doctrine delivered by our Saviour and his A- 

postles : And this *Bellarmino* makes one of the marks of the true church. And they must unavoidably make it so ; because the true faith and doctrine of Christ is that which indeed constitutes the true church. But if this be an essential mark of the true church, then no man can possibly know the church of *Rome* to be the true church, till he have examined the particular doctrines and practices of it, and the agreement of them with the primitive doctrine and practice of christianity ; and this necessarily draws on and engages them in a dispute of the particular points and differences betwixt us ; which is the very thing they would avoid by this method, and which I have now plainly shewed they cannot do, because they cannot possibly prove their church to be the true church, without shewing the conformity of their doctrines and practices to the doctrine and practice of the primitive and apostolick church ; and this will give them work enough, and will, whether they will or no, draw them out of their hold and fastness, which is to amuse people with a general enquiry which is the true church ? without descending to the examination of their particular doctrines and practices. But this they must of necessity come to, before they can prove by the notes and marks of the true church, that theirs is the true church.

And this is a demonstration, that their method of satisfaction, as it is unnatural and unreasonable, so it cannot serve the purpose they aim at by it ; which is, to divert men from the examination of the particular points in difference between the church of *Rome* and us, and to gain them over to them by a wile and trick ; because the very method they take to prove themselves to be the true catholick church, will enforce them to justify all their particular doctrines and practices, before they can finish this proof.  
And

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And here we fix our foot, that the single question and point, upon which they would put the whole issue of the matter, cannot possibly be brought to any reasonable issue, without a particular discussion and examination of the points in difference betwixt their church and ours: And when they can make out these to be agreeable to the primitive doctrine and practice of the christian church, we have reason to be satisfied, that the church of *Rome* is a church in the communion whereof a man may be safe: But till that be made out, they have done nothing to persuade any man that understands himself, that it is safe, much less necessary to be of their communion. But if particular points must be discussed and cleared, before a man can be satisfied in the enquiry after the true church; then they must allow their intended convert to be a judge likewise of particular points; and if he be sufficient for that too, before he comes into their church, I do not see of what use the infallibility of the church will be to him, when he is in it.



SERMON



## S E R M O N V I I I .

*The fifth  
Sermon on  
this text.*

Of Constancy in the Profession of the  
true Religion.

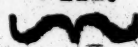
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✱ H E B. X. 23.

*Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without  
wavering; for he is faithful that promised.*

I Have already made a considerable progress in my discourse upon these words, in which I told you, there is an exhortation to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*: And an argument or encouragement thereto, because *he is faithful that promised*. I am yet upon the *first* of these, the exhortation to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*; by which, I told you, the Apostle doth not intend, that those who are capable of examining the grounds and reasons of their religion, should not have the liberty to do it; nor that, when, upon due enquiry, they are, as they verily believe, established in the true faith and religion, they should obstinately refuse to hear any reason that is fairly offered against their present persuasion.

S E R M.  
V I I I .



And then I proceeded to shew *positively*,

*First, What* it is that we are exhorted to *hold fast*, (*viz.*) *the confession, or profession of our faith*; the ancient christian faith, of which every Christian makes profession in his baptism. For it is of *that* the Apostle here speaks, as appears plainly by the context.

*Secondly,*

SERM. Secondly, How we are to *hold fast the profession of*  
 VIII. *our faith.* And of this I gave account in these following particulars.

1. We should *hold fast the profession of our faith*, against the confidence of men, without scripture or reason to support that confidence.

2. And much more against the confidence of men, contrary to plain scripture and reason, and the common sense of mankind; of which I gave you particular instances.

3. Against all the temptations and terrors of the world.

4. Against all vain promises of being put into a safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to heaven upon easier terms, in some other church and religion. I am now upon the

5. And *last* particular I mentioned, namely, that we are to *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, against all the cunning arts and insinuations of busy and disputing men, whose design it is to unhinge men from their religion, and to make profelytes to their party and faction. I have already mentioned some of the arts which they use, (I mean particularly them of the church of *Rome*) in making profelytes to their religion; and I have shewn the absurdity and unreasonableness of them. As,

*First*, In allowing men to be very competent and sufficient judges for themselves, in the choice of their religion; (*i. e.* which is the true church and religion in which alone salvation is to be had;) and yet telling them at the same time, that they are utterly incapable of judging of particular doctrines and points of faith. As for these, they must rely upon the judgment of an infallible church; and if they do not, they will certainly run into damnable errors and mistakes.

And they must of necessity allow them the first, a sufficient ability to judge for themselves in the choice of their religion: Otherwise in vain do they offer them arguments to persuade them to theirs; if they

they cannot judge of the force of them. But now, SERM.  
VIII. after this, to deny them all ability to judge of particular doctrines and points of faith, is a very absurd, and inconsistent pretence.

*Secondly*, Another art they use, in order to their making a right choice of their religion, is earnestly to persuade them to hear and read only the arguments and books on their side: Which is just as if one should go about to persuade a judge, in order to the better understanding and clearer decision of a cause, to hear only the counsel on one side.

*Thirdly*, They tell them, that the only thing they are to enquire into, is, which is the true church, the one catholick church mentioned in the creed, out of which there is no salvation; and when they have found that, they are to rely upon the authority of that church, which is infallible, for all other things. And this method they wisely take, to avoid particular disputes about the innovations and errors which we charge them withal. But I have shewn at large, that this cannot be the first enquiry: Because it is not the true church, that makes the true christian faith and doctrine: But the profession of the true christian faith and doctrine, which makes the true church.

Besides, their way of proving their church to be the only true church, being by the marks and properties of the true church, of which the chief is, the conformity of their doctrines and practices with the primitive and apostolical church; this unavoidably draws on an examination of their particular doctrines and practices, whether they be conformable to those of the primitive and apostolical church, before their great enquiry, *which is the true church?* can be brought to an issue; which, it is plain, it can never be, without entering into the ocean of particular disputes, which they desire above all things to avoid. So that they are never the nearer by this method: they can neither shorten their work by it, nor keep  
off



S E R M. off the examination of their particular errors and cor-  
 VIII. ruptions; which are a very sore place, and they cannot endure we should touch it.

I shall now proceed to discover some other arts and methods which they use in seducing people to their church and religion, and shall be as brief in them as I can.

*Fourthly*, They pretend, that the *Roman* church is the catholick church, *i. e.* the visible society of all Christians, united to the bishop of *Rome*, as the supreme pastor and visible head of Christ's church upon earth: From whence it clearly follows, that it is necessary to all Christians to join themselves to the communion of the *Roman* church; otherwise they cannot be members of the catholick church of Christ; out of which there is no salvation.

We grant the consequence, that if the *Roman* church be the catholick church it is necessary to be of that communion; because out of the catholick church there is ordinarily no salvation to be had. But how do they prove, that the *Roman* church is the catholick church? They would fain have us so civil, as to take this for granted: Because if we do not, they do not well know how to go about to prove it. And indeed, some things are obstinate, and will not be proved without so much trouble and difficulty, that it is better to let them alone; and by the confident assertion of them, by importunity, and by any other fair means, to get them believed, without proof of this stubborn sort of propositions, which will admit of no proof. This is one, that a part is the whole; or which is all one, that the *Roman* church is the catholick church. For that it is but a part of the christian church, and not the best part neither, but perhaps the very worst and most corrupt of all the rest, is no difficult matter to prove, and hath been often done. But now to prove the church of *Rome* to be the catholick church, that is, the whole society of all

true

true Christians in the world, these following particulars ought to be clearly shewn and made out. S E R M.  
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A plain constitution of our Saviour, whereby St. *Peter*, and his successors at *Rome*, are made the supreme head and pastors of the whole christian church. For St. *Peter* first. Can they shew any such constitution in the Gospel, or can they produce the least proof and evidence out of the history of the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles, that St. *Peter* was acknowledged for such by the rest of the Apostles; Nay is there not clear evidence there to the contrary, that in the first council of the christian church at *Jerusalem*, St. *James*, the bishop of *Jerusalem*, was, if not superior, at least equal to him? Does St. *Paul* acknowledge any superiority of St. *Peter* over him? Nay, does he not upon several occasions declare himself equal to the chiefest Apostles, even to St. *Peter* himself? And is this consistent with a plain constitution of our Lord's making St. *Peter* supreme head and pastor of the christian church?

But suppose this to have been so; where doth it appear, by any constitution of our Saviour, that this authority was derived to his successors? And if it were, why to his successors at *Rome*, rather than at *Antioch*, where he was first, and unquestionable bishop? They must acknowledge, that when he was bishop of *Antioch*, he was the supreme head and pastor of the whole christian church; and then the stile must have been, the *Antiochian* catholick church, as it is now the *Roman* catholick. But do they find any footsteps of such a stile in ecclesiastical history?

2. To make good this proposition, that the *Roman* church is the catholick church, they are in consequence obliged to affirm and believe, that the churches of *Asia*, which were excommunicated by the bishops of *Rome*, for not keeping *Easter* as they did; and the churches of *Asia* and *Africa*, which were excommunicated by the same bishop, upon the point of rebaptizing hereticks, that all these, by being turned out

S E R M. of the communion of the *Roman* church, were also  
 VIII. cut off from the catholick church, and from possibi-  
 ~~~~~ lity of salvation. This the church of *Rome* them-  
 selves will not affirm; and yet, if to be cast out of
 the communion of the *Roman*, and the catholick
 church, be all one, they must affirm it.

3. In consequence of this proposition, that the church of *Rome* is the catholick church, they ought to hold, that all baptism out of the communion of their church is void and of none effect. For if it be good; then it makes the persons baptized, members of the catholick church; and then those that are out of the communion of the *Roman* church, may be true members of the catholick church; and then the *Roman*, and the catholick church are not all one. But the church of *Rome* holds the baptism of heretics, and of those that are out of the communion of their church, to be good; which is a demonstration, that the *Roman* church neither is the catholick church; nor if she believe consistently, can she think herself to be so.

4. In consequence of this proposition, all the Christians in the world, which do not yield subjection to the bishop of *Rome*, and acknowledge his supremacy, are no true parts of the catholick church, nor in a possibility of salvation. And this does not only exclude those of the reformed religion from being members of the catholick church; but the *Greeks*, and the *Eastern* churches; (*i. e.*) four of the five patriarchal churches of the christian world; which taken together, are really greater than those in communion with the church of *Rome*. And this the church of *Rome* does affirm, concerning all those churches and Christians, which refuse subjection to the bishop of *Rome*, that they are out of the communion of the catholick church, and a capacity of salvation. But surely it is not possible, that the true catholick church of Christ can have so little charity as this comes to; and to a wise man there needs no other demonstration than
 this,

this, that the church of *Rome* is so far from being the whole christian church, that it is a very arrogant and uncharitable part of it.

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5. *And lastly*; In consequence of the truth of this proposition, and of the importance of it to the salvation of souls, and to the peace and unity of the christian church, they ought to produce express mention of the *Roman* catholick church, in the ancient creeds of the christian church. For if this proposition, that the *Roman* church is the catholick; be true; it was always so, and always of the greatest importance to the salvation of men, and the peace and unity of the christian church, and if it were so, and always believed so by the christian church, as they pretend; what reason can be imagined, why the ancient christian church should never say so, nor put an article of such consequence and importance in express words in their creeds; nor why should they not have used the style of *Roman* catholick as familiarly then, as they do now in the *Roman* church? a plain evidence that this is a new style which they use when they give themselves the title of the *Roman* catholick church; and that the ancient christian church knew better, than to call one part of the catholick church the whole. I am sure, that *Aeneas Silvius* (who was afterwards pope *Pius* the Second) says, that before the council of *Nice*, little respect was had to the *Roman* church. But how does this consist with their present pretence, that the *Roman* church is, and always hath been the catholick church; and that the bishop of *Rome* is by Christ's appointment, the supreme pastor, and visible head of the whole christian church? Is it possible, that this should be believed in the christian church before the council of *Nice*; and yet little respect to be had at that time to the *Roman* church? This indeed was said by *Aeneas Silvius* before he sat in the infallible chair; but is never the less true for that.

Fifthly, The next step of their method is, that the *Roman* church is infallible; and by this means they

S E R M. have a certain remedy against heresy, and a judge of
 VIII. controversies, from which there is no appeal, which
 we want in our church. And this is a glorious privilege indeed, if they could prove that they had it, and that it would be so certain a remedy against heresy, and give a final decision to all controversies. But there is not one tittle of all this, of which they are able to give any tenable proof: For,

1. All the pretence for their infallibility relies upon the truth of the former proposition, that the church of *Rome* is the catholick church, and *that* they say is infallible: And I have already shewn, that that proposition is not only destitute of any good proof; but is as evidently false as that part of a thing is the whole.

2. But supposing it were true, that the *Roman* church were the catholick church; yet it is neither evident in itself, nor can be proved by them, that the catholick church of every age is infallible, in deciding all controversies of religion. It is granted by all Christians, that our Saviour and his Apostles were infallible, in the delivery of the christian doctrine; and they proved their infallibility by miracles; and this was necessary at first for the security of our faith: But this doctrine being once delivered and transmitted down to us in the holy scriptures, written by the Evangelists and Apostles who were infallibly assisted by the holy Ghost; we have now a certain and infallible rule of faith and practice, which, with the assistance and instruction of those guides and pastors which Christ hath appointed in his church, is sufficiently plain in all things necessary. And as there is no evidence of the continuance of infallibility in the guides and pastors of the church, in the ages which followed the Apostles; because miracles are long since ceased: So there is no need of the continuance of it, for the preservation of the true faith and religion; because God hath sufficiently provided for that, by that infallible rule of faith and manners which he hath left to his church in the holy scriptures, *which are every*

ry way sufficient and able to make both pastors and people wise unto salvation.

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3. As for a certain remedy against heresy, it is certain God never intended there should be any ; no more than he hath provided a certain remedy against sin and vice ; which surely is every whit as contrary to the christian religion, and therefore as fit to be provided against, as heresy : But it is certain in experience, that God hath provided no certain and effectual remedy against sin and vice ; for which I can give no other reason, but that God does that which he thinks best and fittest, and not what we are apt to think to be so.

Besides that infallibility is not a certain remedy against heresy. The Apostles were certainly infallible ; and yet they could neither prevent nor extinguish heresy ; which never more abounded than in the Apostles times. And St. Paul expressly tells us, 1 Cor. 1. 19. *That there must be heresies ; that they which are approved may be made manifest.* And St. Peter, the 2 Epist. 2. 1. *That there should be false teachers among Christians, who should privily bring in damnable heresies ; and that many should follow their pernicious ways.* But now if *there must be heresies* ; either the church must not be infallible, or infallibility in the church is no certain remedy against them.

I proceed to the next step they make, viz.

Sixthly, That Christ hath always a visible church upon earth ; and that they can shew a church, which from the time of Christ and his Apostles, hath always made a visible profession of the same doctrines and practices which are now believed and practised in the church of Rome : But that we can shew no visible church, that from the time of Christ and his Apostles hath always opposed the church of Rome, in those doctrines and practices which we now revile and find fault with in their church.

That Christ hath always had, and ever shall have to the end of the world, a visible church, professing

S E R M. and practising his true faith and religion, is agreed on
 VIII. both sides: But we say, that he hath no where promised, that this shall be free from all errors and corruptions in faith and practice. This the churches planted by the Apostles themselves were not, even in their times, and during their abode amongst them; and yet they were true parts of the christian catholick church. In the following ages, errors and corruptions and superstitions did by degrees creep in and grow up in several parts of the church; as St. *Augustin*, and other of the fathers complain of in their times. Since that, several famous parts of the christian church, both in *Asia* and *Africa*, have not only been greatly corrupted, but have apostatized from the faith; so that in many places there are hardly any footsteps of christianity among them. But yet still Christ hath had in all these ages a visible church upon earth; tho' perhaps no part of it at all times free from some errors and corruptions; and in several parts of it great corruptions both in faith and practice; and in none I think more and longer than in the church of *Rome*, for all she boasts herself, like old *Babylon*, Isa. 47. 7, 8. *That she is a Lady for ever; and says in her heart, I am, and none else besides me; and like the church of Laodicea*, Revel. 3. 17. which said, *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; when the spirit of God saith, that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; and knew it not.*

Thus the church of *Rome* boasts, that she hath in all ages been the true visible church of Christ, (and none besides her) free from all errors in doctrine, and corruptions in practice; and that from the age Christ and his Apostles she hath always professed the same doctrines and practices which she does at this day. Can any thing be more shameless than this? Did they always believe *transubstantiation*? let their pope *Gelasius* speak for them; who expressly denies, that in the sacrament there is any substantial change of the bread
 and

and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Was S E R M.
VIII.
this always an article of their faith, and necessary to
be believed by all Christians? let *Scotus*, and several
other of their schoolmen and learned writers speak
for them. Was *purgatory* always believed in the *Ro-
man* church, as it is now defined in the council of
Trent? let several of their learned men speak. In
what father, in what council before that of *Trent*, do
they find Christ to have instituted just *seven sacraments*,
neither more nor less? and for practices in their reli-
gion, they themselves will not say, that in the ancient
christian church the scriptures were with-held from
the people, and lockt up in an unknown tongue; and
that the publick service of God, the prayers and les-
sons were read, and the sacraments celebrated, in an
unknown tongue; and that the sacrament of the
Lord's supper was given to the people only in one
kind. Where do they find in holy scripture, or in
the doctrine and practice of the ancient christian
church, any command or example for the worship
of images, for the invocation of saints and angels,
and the blessed Virgin; which do now make a great
part of their religion? nay, is not the doctrine of
the scriptures, and of the ancient fathers plainly a-
gainst all these practices? With what face then can
it be said, that the church of *Rome* hath made a con-
stant visible profession of the same faith and practice
in all ages, from the time of Christ and his Apostles?
Or would the primitive church of *Rome*, if it should
now visit the earth again, own the present church of
Rome to be the same in all matters of faith and prac-
tice, that it was when they left it?

And whereas they demand of us, to shew a visible
church from the time of Christ and his Apostles, that
hath always opposed the church of *Rome*, in those
points of doctrine and practice which we object to
them; what can be more impertinent than this de-
mand? When they know, that in all these points we

S E R M. charge them with innovations in matters of faith and
 VIII. practice, and ſay that thoſe things came in by degrees,
 ſeveral ages after the Apoſtles time, ſome ſooner,
 ſome later ; as we are able to make good, and have
 done it. And would they have us ſhew them a vi-
 ſible church, that oppoſed theſe errors and corrupti-
 ons in their church, before ever they appeared ? This
 we do not pretend to ſhew. And ſuppoſing they had
 not been at all oppoſed, when they appeared, nor
 a long time after, nor till the reformation ; yet if
 they be errors and corruptions of the chriſtian doc-
 trine, and contrary to the holy ſcriptures, and to the
 faith and practice of the primitive church ; there is
 no preſcription againſt truth. 'Tis never too late for
 any church to reject thoſe errors and corruptions, and
 to reform itſelf from them.

a falſe dilemma
 The bottom of all this matter is, they would have us
 to ſhew them a ſociety of Chriſtians, that in all ages have
 preſerved itſelf free from all ſuch errors and corruptions
 as we charge them withal ; or elſe we deny the per-
 petual viſibility of the catholic church. No ſuch
 matter. We ſay, the church of Chriſt hath always
 been viſible in every age ſince Chriſt's time ; and that
 the ſeveral ſocieties of Chriſtians, profeſſing the
 chriſtian doctrine, and laws of Chriſt, have made up
 the catholic church ; ſome parts whereof have in ſe-
 veral ages fallen into great errors and corruptions ; and
 no part of the catholic into more and greater than
 the church of *Rome* ; ſo that it requires the utmoſt of
 our charity, to think that they are a true, tho' a very
 unſound and corrupt part of the catholic church of
 Chriſt.

We acknowledge likewise, that we were once in-
 volved in the like degeneracy ; but by the mercy of
 God, and pious care and prudence of thoſe that were
 in authority, are happily reſcued out of it : And tho'
 we were not out of the catholic church before ; yet
 ſince our reformation from the errors and corruptions
 of

of the church of *Rome*, we are in it upon better terms, S E R M.
and are a much sounder part of it; and I hope by VIII.
the mercy and goodness of God, we shall for ever
continue so.

So that to the perpetual visibility of Christ's church, it is not necessary, that the whole christian church, nor indeed that any part of it should be free from all errors and corruptions. Even the churches planted by the Apostles in the primitive times were not so. St. *Paul* reproveth several doctrines and practices in the church of *Corinth*, and of *Colosse*, and of *Galatia*; and the spirit of God, several things in the seven churches of *Asia*: And yet all these were true parts and members of the catholick church of Christ, notwithstanding these faults and errors; because they all agreed in the main and essential doctrines of christianity. And when more and greater corruptions grew upon the church, or any part of it, the greater reason and need there was of a reformation. And as every particular person hath a right to reform any thing that he finds amiss in himself so far as concerns himself; so much more every national church hath a power within itself, to reform itself from all errors and corruptions, and by the sanction of the catholick authority to confirm that reformation; which is our case here in *England*. And whatever part of the church, how great and eminent soever, excludes from her communion such a national church, for reforming herself from plain errors and corruptions, clearly condemned by the word of God, and by the doctrine and practice of the primitive christian church, is undoubtedly guilty of *Schism*. And this is the truth of the case between us and the church of *Rome*. And no blind talk about a perpetual visible church can render us guilty of *Schism*, for making a real reformation; or acquit them of it, for casting us out of their communion for that cause.

Seventibly,

S E R M.

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Seventhly, and lastly, (to mention no more) they pretend, that we delude the people, by laying too much stress upon the scripture, and making it the only rule of faith and manners; whereas scripture and tradition together make up the entire rule of faith; and not scripture interpreted by every man's private fancy, but by tradition carefully preserved in the church. So that it ought to be no wonder, if several of their doctrines and practices cannot be so clearly made out by scripture, or perhaps seem contrary to it, as it may be expounded by a private spirit; but not as interpreted by the tradition of the church, which can only give the true sense of scripture. And therefore they are to understand, that several of those doctrines and practices, which we object against, are most clearly proved by the tradition of their church, which is of equal authority with scripture.

In this objection of theirs, which they design for the cover of all the errors and corruptions, there are several things distinctly to be considered, which I shall do as briefly as I can.

First, Whereas it is suggested, that we delude the people by laying too much stress upon the scriptures, (which certainly we cannot well do, if it be the word of God) it ought to be considered, whether they do not delude and abuse them infinitely more, in keeping the scriptures from them, and not suffering them to see that which they cannot deny to be at least a considerable part of the rule of christian doctrine and practice. Doth it not by this dealing of theirs appear very suspicious, that they are extremely afraid that the people should examine their doctrine and practice by this rule? For what other reason can they have to conceal it from them?

Secondly, Whereas they affirm, that scripture alone is not the rule of christian faith and practice, but that scripture and oral tradition preserved in the church, and delivered down from hand to hand, make up the
entire

entire rule; I would fain know, whence they learned this new doctrine of the rule of faith. I know, that the council of *Trent* declares it for the rule they intend to proceed upon, and make use of, for the confirmation and proof of their following determinations and decrees. But did any of the ancient councils of the christian church lay down this rule, and proceed upon it? Did not *Constantine* the Emperor, at the opening of the *first general council*, lay the Bible before them, as the only rule, according to which they were to proceed; and this with the approbation of all those holy fathers that were assembled in that council? And did not following councils proceed upon the same rule? Do any of the ancient fathers ever mention any rule of christian faith and practice, besides the holy scriptures, and the ancient creed; which because it is an abridgment of the necessary articles of christian faith contained in the holy scriptures, is by them frequently called *the rule of faith*? Do not the same fathers frequently and expressly say, that the scriptures are a perfect rule, and that all things are plainly contained in them, which concern faith and life; and that whatever cannot be proved by testimony of scripture, is to be rejected? All this I am sure I can make good, by innumerable express testimonies of the ancient fathers, which are well known to those that are versed in them. By what authority then hath the council of *Trent* set up this new rule, unknown to the christian church for one thousand five hundred years? And who gave them this authority? The plain truth is, the necessity of it for the defence of the errors and corruptions which they had embraced, and were resolved not to part with, forced them to lengthen out the rule; the old rule of the holy scriptures being too short for their purpose.

Thirdly, Whereas they pretend, that holy scripture, as expounded by a private spirit, may not seem so favourable to some of their doctrines and practices; yet,

SERM. yet, as interpreted by tradition, which can only give
 VIII. the true sense of scripture, it agrees very well with
 them: I suppose they mean, that whereas a private
 spirit would be apt to understand some texts of scripture, as if people were to search and read the scripture; tradition interprets those texts in a quite other sense, that people are not to be permitted to read the holy scriptures. A private spirit would be apt to understand St. Paul's discourse, in the 14th of the first to the *Corinthians* to be against celebrating prayer and the service of God in an unknown tongue, as being contrary to edification, and indeed to common sense; For he says, *If one should come, and find them speaking and praying in an unknown tongue, will they not say, Ye are mad?* But now tradition, which only knows how to give the true sense, can reconcile this discourse of St. Paul very easily with the practice of the church of *Rome* in this matter. And so likewise the epistle of St. Paul to the *Colossians*, with the worship of angels; and the epistle to the *Hebrews*, with offering the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ in the mass a thousand times every day. And to give but one instance more: Whereas a man, by his private spirit, would be very apt to understand the second commandment to forbid all worship of images; tradition discovers the meaning of this commandment to be, that *due veneration is to be given to them*. So that at this rate of interpreting scripture by tradition, it is impossible to fix any objection from scripture, upon any doctrine or practice which they have a mind to maintain.

Fourthly, Whereas they pretend the tradition of their church, delivered from the mouth of Christ, or dictated by the Holy Spirit, and brought down to them, and preserved by continual succession in the church, to be of equal authority with the word of God; for so the council of *Trent* says, *that the holy synod doth receive and venerate these traditions with equal pious affection and reverence as they do the written word*

of

of God: This we must declare against, as unreasonable in itself, to make tradition, conveyed by word of mouth from one to another, through so many ages, and liable to so many mistakes and miscarriages, to be, at the distance of one thousand five hundred years, of equal certainty and authority with the holy scriptures, carefully preserved and transmitted down to us; because this (as I said before) is to make common rumour and report of equal authority and certainty with a written record. And not only so; but hereby they make the scriptures an imperfect rule; contrary to the declared judgment of the ancient fathers and councils of the christian church; and so, in truth, they set up a *new rule of faith*, whereby they change the christian religion. For a *new rule of faith and religion*, makes a *new faith and religion*. This we charge the church of *Rome* with, and do challenge them to shew this *new rule of faith*, before the council of *Trent*; and consequently where their religion was before that council; to shew a religion, consisting of all those *articles* which are defined by the council of *Trent* as necessary to salvation, and established upon this *new rule*, professed by any christian church in the world before that time. And as they have pitch'd upon a *new rule of faith*; so it is easy to see to what end. For take Pope *Pius* the IVth's *Creed*, and we may see where the *old* and *new* religion parts; even at the end of the twelve *articles* of the *Apostles Creed*, which was the ancient christian faith; to which are added in Pope *Pius's Creed*, twelve *articles* more, defined in the council of *Trent*, and supported only by tradition. So that as the scripture answers for the *twelve old articles*, which are plainly contained there; so tradition is to answer for the *twelve new ones*. And therefore the matter was calculated very exactly, when they make tradition just of equal authority with the scriptures; because as many *articles* of their faith were to be made good by it, and rely upon it, as those which are proved by the authority of scripture. But that

S E R M.
VIII.

SERMON. that tradition is of equal authority with the scriptures,
 VIII. we have nothing in the whole world for it, but the
 bare assertion of the council of Trent.

I should now have added some other considerations, tending to confirm and establish us in our religion, against the pretences and insinuations of seducing spirits: But I shall proceed no farther at present. *

The sixth
 Sermon on
 this text.

SERMON IX.

Of Constancy in the Profession of the true Religion.

+ HEB. X. 23.

Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.

SERMON.
 IX.

THESE words contain an exhortation to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering and an argument or encouragement thereto; *because he is faithful that promised.* By the exhortation to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, is not meant, that those who are capable of examining the grounds and reasons of their religion, should blindly hold it fast against the best reasons that can be offered; because upon these terms, every man must continue in the religion in which he happens to be fixed by education, or an ill choice, be his religion true or false, without examining and looking into it, whether it be right or wrong, for till a man examines, every man thinks his religion right. That which the Apostle here exhorts Christians to hold fast, is the ancient faith, of which all Christians make

make a solemn *profession* in their *baptism* ; as plainly S E R M.
appears from the context. And this *profession of our* IX.
faith, we are to *hold* in the following instances, which
I shall but briefly mention, without enlarging upon
them.

1. We are to *hold fast the profession of our faith*
against the confidence of men, without scripture or
reason to support that confidence.

2. And much more against the confidence of men,
contrary to plain scripture and reason, and to the
common sense of mankind.

3. Against all the temptations and terrors of the
world, against the temptations of fashion and ex-
ample, and of worldly interest and advantage ; and
against all terrors and sufferings of persecution.

4. Against all vain promises of being put into a
safer condition, and groundless hopes of getting to
heaven upon easier terms than the gospel has proposed,
in some other church and religion.

Lastly, We are to *hold fast the profession of our faith*
without wavering, against all the cunning arts and in-
sinuations of busy and disputing men, whose design
it is to unhinge men from their religion, and to make
profelytes to their party and faction.

But without entring into these particulars, I shall,
in order to our establishment in the reformed religion,
which we profess, in opposition to the errors and
corruptions of the church of *Rome*, apply myself at
this time, to make a short comparison betwixt the
religion which we profess, and that of the church of
Rome, that we may discern on which side the advan-
tage of truth lies ; and in making this comparison, I
shall insist upon *three* things which will bring the
matter to an issue, and are, I think sufficient to de-
termine every sober and considerate man, which of
these he ought in reason, and with regard to the safety
of his soul, to embrace ; and they are these,

I. That we govern our belief and practice, in mat-
ters of religion by the true ancient rule of christianity
the

S E R M. the word of God contained in the holy scriptures:

IX. But the church of *Rome*, for the maintenance of their errors and corruptions, have been forced to devise a new rule never owned by the primitive church, nor by the ancient fathers and councils of it.

II. That the doctrines and practices in difference betwixt us and the church of *Rome*, are either contrary to this rule, or destitute of the warrant and authority of it, and are plain additions to the ancient Christianity, and corruptions of it.

III. That our religion hath many clear advantages of that of the church of *Rome*, not only very considerable in themselves, but very obvious and discernable to an ordinary capacity, upon the first proposal of them. I shall be as brief in these as I can.

I. That we govern our belief and practice in matters of religion, by the true ancient rule of christianity, the word of God contain'd in the holy scriptures: But the church of *Rome*, for the maintaining of their errors and corruptions, have been forced to devise a new rule, never owned by the primitive church, nor by the ancient councils and fathers of it; that is, they have joined with the word of God contained in the holy scriptures, the unwritten traditions of their church, concerning several points of their faith and practice, which they acknowledge cannot be proved from scripture, and these they call the unwritten word of God; and the council of *Trent* hath decreed them to be *of equal authority with the holy scriptures*, and that they do *receive and venerate them with the same pious Affection and reverence*; and all this, contrary to the express declaration and unanimous consent of all the ancient councils and fathers of the christian church, (as I have already shewn;) and this never declared to be a point of faith, till it was decreed, not much above a hundred years ago, in the council of *Trent*. And this surely, if any thing, is a matter of great consequence, to presume

to alter the ancient rule of christian doctrine and practice, and to enlarge it, and add to it at their pleasure. But the church of *Rome* having made so great a change in the doctrine and practice of christianity, it became consequently necessary to make a change of the rule: And therefore with great reason did the council of *Trent* take this into consideration in the first place, and put it in the front of their decrees, because it was to be the foundation and main proof of the following definitions of Faith, and decrees of practice, for which, without this new rule, there had been no colour.

S E R M.

IX.

II. The doctrines and practices in difference betwixt us, and the church of *Rome*, are either contrary to the true rule, or destitute of the warrant and authority of it, and plain additions to the ancient christianity, and corruptions of it. The truth of this will best appear, by instancing in some of the principal doctrines and practices in difference betwixt us.

As for their too great fundamental doctrines, of the supremacy of the bishop of *Rome* over all the Christians in the world, and the infallibility of their church, there is not one word in scripture concerning these privileges; nay, it is little less than a demonstration that they have no such privileges, that *St. Paul* in a long epistle to the church of *Rome* takes no notice of them, that the church of *Rome* either then was, or was to be soon after, the mother and mistress of all churches, which is now grown to be an article of faith, in the church of *Rome*; and yet it is hardly to be imagined, that he could have omitted to take notice of such remarkable privileges of their bishops and church, above any in the world, had he known they had belonged to them. So that in all probability he was ignorant of those mighty prerogatives of the church of *Rome*; otherwise it cannot be, but that he would have written with more deference and submission to this seat of infallibility, and center of unity; he would certainly have paid a

SERM. greater respect to this mother and mistress of all
 IX. churches, where the head of the church, and vicar of
 ~~~~~ Christ, either was already seated, or by the appoint-  
 ment of Christ was designed for ever to fix his throne  
 and establish his residence; but there is not one  
 word, or the least intimation of any such thing  
 throughout this whole epistle, nor in any other part  
 of the new testament.

Besides that both these pretended privileges are  
 omitted, by plain fact and evidence of things them-  
 selves; their *supremacy*, in that the far greatest part  
 of the christian church, neither is at this day, nor can  
 be shewn by the records of any age, ever to have  
 been subject to the bishop of *Rome*, or to have ac-  
 knowledged his authority and jurisdiction over them:  
 And the *infallibility* of the Pope, whether with or  
 without a general council, about which they still  
 differ, though infallibility was devised on purpose to  
 determine all differences; I say, this *infallibility*,  
 where-ever it is pretended to be, is plainly confuted  
 by the contradictory definitions of several Popes and  
 councils; for if they have contradicted one another,  
 as is plain, beyond all contradiction, in several in-  
 stances, then there must of necessity be an error on  
 one side; and there can be no so certain demon-  
 stration, that any one is infallible, as evident error  
 and mistake is of the contrary.

Next, their concealing both the rule of religion,  
 and the practice of it in the worship and service of  
 God, from the people, in an unknown tongue; and  
 their administering the communion to the people in  
 one kind only, contrary to clear scripture, and the  
 plain institution of our blessed Saviour. And then  
 their worship of images, and invocation of Angels  
 and saints, and the blessed Virgin, in the same so-  
 lemn manner, and for the same blessings and benefits  
 which we beg of God himself; contrary to the express  
 word of God, which commands us *to worship the Lord*  
*our God, and to serve him only*; and which declares,  
 that

that as there is but *one God*, so there is but *one me-* SERM.  
*diator between God and man, Christ Jesus*; but *one me-* IX.  
*diator*, not only of *redemption*, but of *intercession* too; for the Apostle there speaks of a *mediator of inter-*  
*cession*, by whom only we are to offer up our prayers, which are to be put up to God only; and which expressly forbids men to worship any image or likeness. And the learned men of their own church acknowledge, that there is neither precept nor example for these practices in scripture, and that they were not used in the christian church for several ages; and this acknowledgment we think very considerable, since so great a part of their religion, especially as it is practised among the people, is contained in these points. For the service of God in an unknown tongue, and with-holding the scriptures from the people, they do not pretend so much as one testimony of any father for the first six hundred years, and nothing certainly can be more unreasonable in itself, than to deny people the best means of knowing the will of God, and not to permit them to understand what is done in the publick worship of God, and what prayers are put up to him in the church.

The two great doctrines of *transubstantiation* and *purgatory* are acknowledged by many of their own learned writers, to have no certain foundation in scripture: And that there are *seven sacraments* of the christian religion, tho' it be now made an article of faith by the council of *Trent*, is a thing which cannot be shewn in any council or father for above a thousand years after Christ. And we find no mention of this number of the sacraments, till the age of *Peter Lombard* the father of the schoolmen.

That the church of *Rome* is the *mother and mistress* of all churches, tho' that also be one of the new articles of Pope *Pius IV.* his Creed, which their priests are by a solemn oath obliged to believe and teach; yet it is most evidently false. That she is not the

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mother of all churches is plain, because *Jerusalem* was certainly so; for *there* certainly was the first christian church, and from thence all the christian churches in the world derive themselves: That she is not, (tho' she fain would be) the mistress of all churches, is as evident, because the greatest part of the christian church does at this day, and always did deny that she hath any authority or supremacy over them. Now these are the principal matters in difference betwixt us; and if these points, and a few more, be pared off from *Popery*, that which remains of their religion, is the same with ours, that is, the true ancient christianity.

III. I shall shew that our religion hath many clear advantages of theirs, not only very considerable in themselves, but very obvious and discernible to an ordinary capacity, upon the very first proposal of them; as,

1. That our religion agrees perfectly with the scriptures, and all points both of our belief and practice, esteemed by us as necessary to salvation, are there contained, even our enemies themselves being judges. We *worship the Lord our God, and him only do we serve*. We do not fall down before images and worship them: We address all prayers to God alone, by the only mediation and intercession of his Son Jesus Christ, as he himself hath given us commandment, and as St. *Paul* doth plainly direct, giving us this plain and substantial reason for it, because as there is but *one God*, so there is but *one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*.

The publick worship and service of God is performed by us in a language which we understand, according to St. *Paul's* express order and direction, and the universal practice of the ancient church, and the nature and reason of the thing itself. We administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in both kinds, according to our Saviour's example and plain institution, and the continual practice of all the christian



stian churches in the world, for above a thousand years. S E R M.  
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2. We believe nothing as necessary to salvation, but what hath been owned in all ages to be the christian doctrine, and is acknowledged so to be by the church of *Rome* itself; and we receive the whole faith of the primitive christian church, (*viz.*) whatever is contained in the Apostles Creed, and in the explications of that in the Creeds of the four first general councils. By which it plainly appears, that all the points of faith in difference betwixt us and the church of *Rome* are mere innovations and plain additions to the ancient christian faith: But all that we believe, is acknowledged by them to be undoubtedly the ancient christian faith.

3. There is nothing wanting in our church and religion, whether in matter of faith or practice, which either the scripture makes necessary to salvation, or was so esteemed by the christian church for the first five hundred years; and we trust, that what was sufficient for the salvation of Christians in the best ages of christianity, for five hundred years together, may be so still; and we are very well content to venture our salvation upon the same terms that they did.

4. Our religion is not only free from all idolatrous worship, but even from all suspicion and probable charge of any such thing: but this the church of *Rome* is not, as is acknowledged by her most learned champions, and as no man of ingenuity can deny; and the reason which the learned men give, why the worship of images and the invocation of Angels and saints departed were not practised in the primitive church for the first three hundred years, is a plain acknowledgment that these practices are very liable to the suspicion of idolatry: for they say, that the Christians did then forbear those practices because they seemed to come too near to the Pagan idolatry, and lest the heathen should have taken occasion to

S E R M. have justified themselves, if these things had been  
 IX. practised among Christians; and they cannot now be  
 ignorant, what scandal they give by these practices  
 both to the *Jews* and *Turks*, and how much they  
 alienate them from christianity by this scandal; nor  
 can they chuse but be sensible, upon how great dis-  
 advantage they are in defending these practices from  
 the charge of idolatry, and that by all their blind di-  
 stinctions, with which they raise such a cloud and  
 dust, they can hardly make any plausible and tole-  
 rable defence of themselves from this charge; inso-  
 much, that to secure their own people from discern-  
 ing their guilt in this matter, they have been put  
 upon that shameful shift of leaving out the second  
 commandment in their common catechisms and ma-  
 nuals, lest the people seeing so plain a law of God  
 against so common a practice of their church, should  
 upon that discovery have broken off from them.

5. Nor is our religion encumber'd with such an  
 endless number of superstitious and troublesome ob-  
 servances, as theirs infinitely is, even beyond the  
 number of the *Jewish* ceremonies, to the great bur-  
 den and scandal of the christian religion, and the di-  
 verting of mens minds from the spiritual part of re-  
 ligion, and the more weighty and necessary duties of  
 the christian life; so that, in truth, a devout pastor  
 is so taken up with the external rites and little obser-  
 vances of his religion, that he hath little or no time  
 to make himself a good man, and to cultivate and  
 improve his mind in true piety and virtue.

6. Our religion is evidently more charitable to all  
 christians that differ from us, and particularly to  
 them, who by their uncharitableness to us, have done  
 as much as is possible to discharge and damp our charity  
 towards them. And charity, as it is one of the most  
 essential marks of a true Christian, so it is likewise  
 the best mark and ornament of a true church; and of  
 all things that can be thought of, methinks the want  
 of charity in any church should be a motive to no man

to fall in love with it, and to be fond of its communion. S E R M.  
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7. Our religion doth not clash and interfere with any of the great moral duties to which all mankind stand obliged by the law and light of nature; as fidelity, mercy and truth. We do not teach men to break faith with hereticks or infidels; nor to destroy and extirpate those who differ from us, with fire and sword: No such thing as equivocation or mental-reservation, or any other artificial way of falshood is either taught or maintained, either by the doctrine, or by the casuists of our church.

8. Our religion and all the doctrines of it are perfectly consistent with the peace of civil government, and the welfare of human society. We neither exempt the clergy from subjection to the civil powers; nor absolve subjects upon any pretence whatsoever from allegiance to their Princes; both which points, the necessity of the one, and the lawfulness of the other, have been taught and stiffly maintain'd in the church of *Rome*, not only by private doctors, but by Popes and general Councils.

9. The doctrines of our religion, are perfectly free from all suspicion of a worldly interest and design; whereas the greatest part of the erroneous doctrines with which we charge the church of *Rome*, are plainly calculated to promote the end of worldly greatness and dominion.

The Pope's *kingdom is plainly of this world*; and the doctrines and maxims of it, like so many *servants*, are *ready upon all occasions to fight for him*. For most of them do plainly tend, either to the establishment and enlargement of his authority; or to the magnifying of the priests, and the giving them a perfect power over the consciences of the people, and the keeping them in a slavish subjection and blind obedience to them. And to this purpose do plainly tend the doctrines of exempting the clergy from the secular power and jurisdiction, the doctrine of transubstantiation;



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substantiation ; for it must needs make the priest a great man in the opinion of the people, to believe that he can make God, as they love to express it, without all reason and reverence. Of the like tendency is the communicating of the laity only in one kind, thereby making it the sole privilege of the priest to receive the sacrament in both : The withholding the scripture from the people, and celebrating the service of God in an unknown tongue : The doctrine of an implicit faith, and absolute resignation of their judgments to their teachers : These do all directly tend to keep the people in ignorance, and to bring them to a blind obedience to the dictates of their teachers. So likewise the necessity of the intention of the priest, to the saving virtue and efficacy of the sacraments ; by which doctrine, the people do upon the matter depend as much upon the good will of the priest, as upon the mercy of God for their salvation. But above all, their doctrine of the necessity of auricular and private confession of all mortal sins committed after baptism, with all the circumstances of them to the priest ; and this not only for the ease and direction of their consciencies, but as a necessary condition of having their sins pardoned and forgiven by God ; by which means they make themselves masters of all the secrets of the people, and keep them in awe by the knowledge of their faults, *Scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timeri*. Or else their doctrines tend to filthy lucre, and the enriching of their church : As their doctrines of purgatory and indulgencies, and their prayers and masses for the dead ; and many more doctrines and practices of the like kind plainly do.

10. Our religion is free from all disingenuous and dishonest arts of maintaining and supporting itself. Such are clipping of ancient authors, nay, and even the authors and writers of their own church, when they speak too freely of any point ; as may be seen in their *indices expurgatorii*, which much against their wills have been brought to light. To which I shall only

only add these three gross forgeries, which lie all at S E R M. IX.  
their doors, and they cannot deny them to be so.

1. The pretended *canon* of the council of *Nice* in the case of appeals, between the church of *Rome* and the *African* church; upon which they insisted a great while very confidently, till at last they were convinced by authentick copies of the cannons of that council.

2. *Constantine's* donation to the Pope, which they kept a great stir with, till the forgery of it was discovered.

3. The decretal epistles of the ancient Popes; a large volume of forgeries compiled by *Isidore Mercator*, to countenance the usurpations of the bishop of *Rome*, and of which the church of *Rome* made a great use for several ages, and pertinaciously defended the authority of them, till the learned men of their own church have at last been forced for very shame to disclaim them, and to confess the imposture of them. A like instance whereto is not I hope to be shewn in any christian church. This is that which *St. Paul* calls *νῦν δὲ, the sleight of men*, such as gamesters use at dice; for to alledge false and forged authors in this case, is to play with false dice, when the salvation of men's souls lies at stake.

II. Our religion has this mighty advantage. That it doth not decline tryal and examination, which to any man of ingenuity must needs appear a very good sign of an honest cause; but if any church be shy of having her religion examined, and her doctrines and practices brought into the open light, this gives just ground of suspicion that she hath some distrust of them; for truth doth not seek corners, nor shun the light. Our Saviour hath told us who they are that love darkness rather than light, viz. they whose deeds are evil; for every one, saith he, that doth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd and made manifest. There needs no more to render a religion suspected to a wise man, than

S E R M. than to see those who profess it, and make such proud  
 IX. boasts of the truth and goodness of it, so fearful that  
 it should be examined and looked into, and that their  
 people should take the liberty to hear and read what  
 can be said against it.

12. We persuade men to our religion by human and christian ways, such as our Saviour and his Apostles used, by urging men with the authority of God, and with arguments fetch'd from another world, the promise of eternal life and happiness, and the threatening of eternal death and misery, which are the proper arguments of religion, and which alone are fitted to work upon the minds and consciences of men. The terror and torture of death may make men hypocrites, and awe them to profess with their mouths what they do not believe in their hearts; but this is no proper means of converting the soul, and convincing the minds and consciences of men; and these violent and cruel ways cannot be denied to have been practised in the church of *Rome*, and set on foot by the authority of councils, and greatly countenanced and encouraged by Popes themselves; witness the many croisades for the extirpation of hereticks, the standing cruelties of their inquisition, their occasional massacres and persecutions, of which we have fresh instances in every age.

But these methods of conversion are a certain sign that they either distrust the truth and goodness of their cause, or else that they think truth and the arguments for it are of no force, when dragoons are their *ratio ultima*, the last reason which their cause relies upon, and the best and most effectual it can afford.

Again, we hold no doctrines in defiance of the senses of all mankind; such as is that of transubstantiation, which is now declared in the church of *Rome* to be a necessary article of faith, so that a man cannot be of that religion, unless he will renounce his senses, and believe against the clear verdict of them in a plain sensible matter: But after this, I do not  
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understand how a man can believe any thing, because by this very thing he destroys and takes away the foundation of all certainty. If any man forbid me to believe what I see, I forbid him to believe any thing upon better and surer evidence. *St. Paul* saith, that *faith cometh by hearing*. But if I cannot rely upon the certainty of sense, then the means whereby faith is conveyed is uncertain; and we may say as *St. Paul* doth in another case, *then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain*.

*Lastly*, (to mention no more particulars) as to several things used and practised in the church of *Rome*, we are on much the safer side, if we should happen to be mistaken about them, than they are, if they should be mistaken; for it is certainly lawful to read the scriptures, and lawful to permit to the people the use of the scriptures in a known tongue; otherwise we must condemn the Apostles and the primitive church for allowing this liberty. It is certainly lawful to have the publick prayers and service of God celebrated in a language which all that join in it can understand. It is certainly lawful to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people in both kinds; otherwise the christian church would not have done it for a thousand years. It is certainly lawful not to worship images, not to pray to angels, or saints, or the blessed Virgin; otherwise the primitive church would not have forborn these practices for three hundred years, as is acknowledged by those of the church of *Rome*.

Suppose a man should pray to God only, and offer up all his prayers to him only by Jesus Christ, without making mention of any other mediator or intercessor with God for us, relying herein upon what the Apostle says concerning our *High-Priest*, *Jesus the Son of God*, Heb. 7. 25. *That he is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, (i. e.) by his mediation and intercession, since he ever liveth*

S E R M. *liveth to make intercession for them* ; might not a man reasonably hope to obtain of God all the blessings he stands in need of by addressing himself only to him, in the name and by the intercession of that *one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus* ? Nay, why may not a man reasonably think that this is both a shorter and more effectual way to obtain our requests, than by turning ourselves to the angels and saints, and importuning them to solícite God for us ; especially if we should order the matter so, as to make ten times more frequent addresses to these, than we do to God and our blessed Saviour ; and, in comparison of the other, to neglect these. We cannot certainly think any more able to help us and do us good, than the great God of heaven and earth, *the God* (as the Psalmist styles him) *that beareth prayers*, and therefore *unto him should all flesh come*. We cannot certainly think any intercessor so powerful and prevalent with God, as his only and dearly beloved Son, offering up our prayers to God in heaven, by virtue of that most acceptable and invaluable sacrifice, which he offered to him on earth. We cannot surely think, that there is so much goodness any where as in God ; that in any of the angels or saints, or even in the blessed mother of our Lord, there is more mercy and compassion for sinners, and a tenderer sense of our infirmities, than in the Son of God, *who is at the right hand of his Father, to appear in the presence of God for us*. We are sure that God always hears the petitions which we put up to him ; and so does the Son of God, by whom we put them up to the Father, because he also is *God blessed for evermore*. But we are not sure that the angels and saints hear our prayers, because we are sure that they are neither omniscient nor omnipresent ; and we are not sure, nor probably certain, that our prayers are made known to them any other way, there being no revelation of God, to that purpose. We are sure that

that

that God hath declared himself to be a *jealous God*, S E R M.  
and that *he will not give his honour to another*; and IX.  
we are not sure but that prayer is part of the honour  
which is due to God alone; and if it were not, we  
can hardly think but that God should be so far from  
being pleased with our making so frequent use of  
those other mediators and intercessors, and from grant-  
ing our desires the sooner upon that account; that,  
on the contrary, we have reason to think he should  
be highly offended, when he himself is ready to re-  
ceive all our petitions, and hath appointed a great  
mediator to that purpose, to see more addressees made  
to, and by the angels and saints, and blessed Virgin,  
than to himself by his blessed Son: And to see the  
worship of himself almost justled out, by the devo-  
tion of people to saints and angels, and the blessed  
mother of our Lord; a thing which he *never com-  
manded*, and which, so far as appears by scripture  
*never came into his mind*. I have been the longer up-  
on this matter, to shew how unreasonable and need-  
less at the best, this more than half part of the reli-  
gion of the church of *Rome* is; and how safely it may  
be let alone.

But now, on the other hand, if they be mistaken  
in these things, as we can demonstrate from scripture  
they are, the danger is infinitely great on that side;  
for then they oppose an institution of Christ, who  
appointed the sacrament to be received in both kinds;  
and they involve themselves in a great danger of the  
guilt of idolatry, and our common christianity in the  
scandal and reproach of it; and this without any ne-  
cessity, since *God hath requireth none of these things at  
our hands*; and, after all the bustle which hath been  
made about them, the utmost they pretend (which  
yet they are not able to make good) is, that these  
things may lawfully be done; and at the same time  
they cannot deny, but that if the church had not en-  
joined them, they might lawfully be let alone. And  
can



S E R M. can any thing be more unreasonable, than so pertinaciously to insist upon things so hard, I may say impossible, to be defended or excused, and which by their own acknowledgment, are of no great weight and necessity; in which we are certainly safe in not doing them, if they should prove lawful; but if they do not prove so, they are in a most dangerous condition. So that here is certain safety on the one hand, and the danger of damnation on the other; which is as great odds as is possible.

And they must not tell us that they are in no danger, because they are infallible, and cannot be mistaken; they must prove that point a great deal better than they have yet done, before it can signify any thing either to our satisfaction or their safety.

I might have insisted more largely upon each of these particulars, any one of which is of weight to incline a man to that religion, which hath such an advantage on its side; but all of them together make so powerful an argument to an unprejudiced person, as must almost irresistibly determine his choice; for most of the particulars are so evident, that they cannot, upon the very mention and proposal of them, be denied to be clear advantages on our side.

And now, to use the words of St. Peter, *I testify unto you that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand*, that the reformed religion which we profess, and which by the goodness of God is by law established in this nation, is the true ancient christianity, the faith which was at first delivered to the saints, and which is conveyed down to us in the writings of the Apostles and the Evangelists of our Lord and Saviour. *Remember therefore how ye have received and heard; and hold fast; for he is faithful that hath promised*; which is the second part of the text: The encouragement which the Apostle gives us to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, he is faithful that hath promised to give us his Holy Spirit to lead

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*us into all truth, to establish, strengthen, and settle us in the profession of it, to support and comfort us under all trials and temptations, and to seat us up to the day of redemption; and he is faithful that hath promised to reward our constancy and fidelity to him and his truth, with a crown of everlasting life and glory. Wherefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; for he is faithful that hath promised; and let us provoke one another to charity and good works, which are the great ornament and glory of any religion, and so much the more, because the day approacheth in which God will judge the belief and lives of men, by Jesus Christ; not according to the imperious and uncharitable dictates of any church, but according to the Gospel of his Son, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever.*

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*Now the God of peace, which brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good word and work, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

\* March 16. 1805

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S E R M O N

## S E R M O N X.

The Christian Life, a Life of Faith.

2 C O R. V. 7.

*For we walk by Faith, not by Sight.*S E R M.  
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**I**N the latter part of the former chapter, the Apostle declares what it was that was the great support of Christians under the persecutions and sufferings which beset them, viz. the assurance of a blessed resurrection to another life, ver. 14. *Knowing that he which raiseth up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus; for which cause, saith he, ver. 16. we faint not; but though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day; that is, though our bodies, by reason of the hardships and sufferings which we undergo, are continually decaying and declining; yet our minds grow every day more healthful and vigorous, and gain new strength and resolution, by contemplating the glory and reward of another world, and as it were feeding upon them by faith; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*

And he resumes the same argument again at the beginning of this chapter; *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; that is, we are firmly persuaded, that when we die, we shall but exchange these earthly and perishing bodies, these houses of clay, for a heavenly mansion, which will never decay nor come*



to ruin: From whence he concludes, ver. 6. *Therefore we are always confident, & appear in the world, therefore* S E R M.  
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whatever happens to us, we are always of good courage, and see no reason to be afraid of death; *knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*; that is, since our continuance in the body is to our disadvantage, and while we live, we are absent from our happiness, and when we die we shall then enter upon the possession of it. That which gives us this confidence and good courage, is our faith; for though we be not actually possess'd of this happiness which we speak of, yet we have a firm persuasion of the reality of it, which is enough to support our spirits, and keep up our courage under all afflictions and adversities whatsoever, ver. 7. *For we walk by faith not by sight.*

These words come in by way of *Parenthesis*, in which the Apostle declares in general, what is the swaying and governing principle of a christian life; not only in case of persecution and affliction, but under all events, and in every condition of human life; and that is faith, in opposition to sight and present enjoyment: *We walk by faith, and not by sight. We walk by faith*: Whatever principle sways and governs a man's life and actions, he is said to walk and live by it. And as here a Christian is said to *walk by faith*, so elsewhere *the just* is said to *live by faith*. Faith is the principle which animates all his resolutions and actions.

And *not by sight*. The word is *οὐρα*, which signifies the thing itself in present view and possession, in opposition to a firm persuasion of things future and invisible. Sight is the thing in hand, and faith the thing only in hope and expectation. Sight is a clear view and apprehension of things present and near to us, faith an obscure discovery and apprehension of things at a distance: So the Apostle tells us, 2. Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly*; this is faith; *but then face to face*, this is present sight,

S E R M. as one man sees another face to face; and thus likewise the same Apostle distinguisheth betwixt hope and sight, *Rom. 8. 24, 25.* *Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for it? but if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* Sight is possession and enjoyment; faith is the firm persuasion and expectation of a thing; and this the Apostle tells us was the governing principle of a Christian's life; *For we walk by faith, and not by sight*; from which words I shall observe these three things.

I. That faith is the governing principle, and that which bears the great sway in the life and actions of a Christian; *we walk by faith*; that is we order and govern our lives in the power and virtue of this principle.

II. Faith is a degree of assent inferiour to that of sense. This is sufficiently intimated in the opposition betwixt faith and sight. He had said before, *that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*; and gives this as a reason and proof of our absence from the Lord, *for we walk by faith, and not by sight*; that is, whilst we are in the body, we do not see and enjoy, but believe and expect; if we were present with the Lord, then faith would cease, and be turned into sight; but tho' we have not that assurance of another world, which we shall have when we come to see and enjoy these things, yet we are firmly persuaded of them.

III. Notwithstanding faith be an inferiour degree of assurance, yet 'tis a principle of sufficient power to govern our lives; *we walk by faith*; it is such an assurance as hath an influence upon our lives.

I. That faith is the governing principle, and that which bears the great sway in the life and actions of a Christian. *We walk by faith*; that is, we order and govern our lives in the power and virtue of this principle. A Christian's life consists in obedience to the will of God; that is, in a readiness to do what he

he commands, and in a willingness to suffer what he S E R M.  
calls us to ; and the great arguments and encourage- X.  
ments hereto, are such things, as are the objects of  
faith and not of sense ; such things as are absent and  
future, and not present, and in possession. For in-  
stance, the belief of an invisible God, of a secret  
power and providence, that orders and governs all  
things, that can bless or blast us, and all our designs  
and undertakings, according as we demean ourselves  
towards him, and endeavour to approve ourselves  
to him ; the persuasion of a secret aid and influence  
always ready at hand to keep us from evil, and to  
strengthen and assist us to that which is good ; more  
especially the firm belief, and expectation of the hap-  
piness of heaven, and the glorious rewards of ano-  
ther world, which tho' they be now at a distance,  
and invisible to us, yet being grounded upon the pro-  
mise of God that cannot lie, shall certainly be made  
good.

And this faith, this firm persuasion of absent and  
invisible things, the Apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us,  
was the great principle of the piety and virtue of  
good men from the beginning of the world. This  
he calls, *Ch. 11. ver. 1.* the *fiduciam*, or the confident  
expectation of things hoped for, and the proof or evi-  
dence of things not seen, viz. a firm persuasion of the  
being and providence of God, and of the truth and  
faithfulness of his promises. Such was the faith of  
*Abel*, he believed that there was a God, and that he  
was a rewarder of those that faithfully serve him. Such  
was the faith of *Noah*, who being warned of God,  
of things at a great distance, and not seen as yet,  
notwithstanding believed the divine prediction con-  
cerning the flood, and prepared an ark. Such also  
was the faith of *Abraham*, concerning a numerous  
posterity by *Isaac*, and the inheritance of the land of  
*Canaan* ; and such likewise was the faith of *Moses*,  
he did as firmly believe the invisible God, and the



SERM. recompense of reward, as if he had beheld them with  
X. his eyes.

And of this recompense of reward, we Christians have a much clearer revelation, and much greater assurance, than former ages and generations had; and the firm belief and persuasion of this, is the great motive and argument to a holy life; *The hope which is set before us* of obtaining the happiness, and the fear of incurring the misery of another world. This made the primitive Christians, with so much patience to bear the sufferings and persecutions, with so much constancy to venture upon the dangers and inconveniencies which the love of God and religion exposed them to.

Under the former dispensation of the law, tho' good men received good hopes of the rewards of another life, yet these things were but obscurely revealed to them, and the great inducements to obedience were temporal rewards and punishments, the promises of long life, and peace, and plenty, and prosperity, in that good land which God had given them, and the threatnings of war, and famine, and pestilence, and being delivered into captivity. But now under *the Gospel*, *life and immortality are brought to light*; and the great arguments that bear sway with Christians, are the promises of everlasting life, and the threatnings of eternal misery; and the firm belief and persuasion of these is now the great principle that governs the lives and actions of good men: For what will not men do, that are really persuaded, that as they do demean themselves in this world, it will fare with them in the other? That *the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal*. I proceed to the

II. Observation, namely, that faith is a degree of assent, inferior to that of sense. This is intimated in the opposition betwixt faith and sight; *We walk by faith, and not by sight*; that is, we believe these things, and are confidently persuaded of the truth of them,

them, tho' we never saw them, and consequently S E R M.  
X.  
cannot possibly have that degree of assurance concerning the joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, which those have who enjoy the one and endure the other.

There are different degrees of assurance concerning things, arising from the different degrees of evidence we have for them. The highest degree of evidence we have for any thing is our own sense and experience; and this is so firm and strong, that it is not to be shaken by the utmost pretence of a rational demonstration; men will trust their own senses and experience, against any subtilty of reason whatsoever: But there are inferiour degrees of assurance concerning things, as the testimony and authority of persons every way credible: And this assurance we have in this state concerning the things of another world, we believe with great reason, that we have the testimony of God concerning them, which is the highest kind of evidence in itself; and we have all the reasonable assurance we can desire that God hath testified these things, and this is the uttermost assurance which things future, and at a distance are capable of.

But yet it is an unreasonable obstinacy to deny, that this falls very much short of that degree of assurance which those persons have concerning these things, who are now in the other world, and have the sense and experience of these things. And this is not only intimated here in the text, in the opposition of faith and sight, but is plainly exprest in other texts of scripture; 1 Cor. 13: 9, 10. *We know now but in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.* That degree of knowledge and assurance which we have in this life is very imperfect, in comparison to what we shall have hereafter; and ver. 12. *We now see, as through a glass darkly, &c. as in a riddle,* in which there is always a great deal of obscurity; all which expressions are certainly intended by way of abatement and diminution.

S E R M. minution to the certainty of faith; because it is plain,  
 X. by *that which is in any part, or imperfect*, the Apostle  
 means faith and hope, which he tells us shall cease,  
 when *that which is perfect*, meaning vision and sight,  
 is come. We see likewise in experience, that the  
 faith and hope of the best Christians in this life is ac-  
 companied with doubting concerning these things,  
 and all doubting is a degree of uncertainty; but those  
 blessed souls who are enter'd upon the possession of  
 glory and happiness, and those miserable wretches  
 who lie groaning under the wrath of God and the  
 severity of his justice, cannot possibly, if they would,  
 have any doubt concerning the truth and reality of  
 these things.

But however contentious men may dispute against  
 common sense, this is so plain a truth, that I will  
 not labour in the farther proof of it; nor indeed is it  
 reasonable, while we are in this state, to expect that  
 degree of assurance concerning the rewards and pu-  
 nishments of another life, which the sight and sen-  
 sible experience of them would give us; and that  
 upon these two accounts;

1. Because our present state will not admit it; and,
2. If it would, it is not reasonable we should have it.

1. Our present state will not admit it. For while  
 we are in this world, it is not possible we should have  
 that sensible experiment and trial how things are in  
 the other. The things of the other world are remote  
 from us, and far out of sight, and we cannot have  
 any experimental knowledge of them, till we our-  
 selves enter into that state. Those who are already  
 past into it know how things are; those happy souls  
 who live in the reviving presence of God, and are  
 possessors of those joys which we cannot now conceive,  
 understand these things in another manner, and have  
 a more perfect assurance concerning them, than it is  
 possible for any man to have in this world, and those  
 wretched and miserable spirits who feel the vengeance  
 of



of God, and are plunged into the horrors of eternal darkness, do believe upon irresistible evidence, and have other kind of convictions of the reality of that state, and the insupportable misery of it, than any man is capable of in this world. S E R M.  
X.

2. If our present state would admit of this high degree of assurance, it is not fit and reasonable that we should have it. Such an over-powering evidence would quite take away the virtue of faith, and much lessen that of obedience. Put the case that every man, some considerable time before his departure out of this life were permitted to visit the other world, to assure him how things are there, to view the mansions of the blessed, and to survey the dark and loathsome prisons of the damned, to hear the lamentable outcries of miserable and despairing souls, and to see the inconceivable anguish and torments they are in; after this, what virtue would it be in any man to believe these things? he that had been there and seen them, could not disbelieve them if he would. Faith in this case would not be a virtue, but necessity, and therefore it is observable, that our Saviour doth not pronounce them blessed, who believed his resurrection, upon the forcible evidence of their own senses, *but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* They might be happy in the effects of that faith, but there is no praise, no reward belongs to that faith which is wrought in man by so violent and irresistible an evidence. It was the great commendation of Abraham's faith, that *against hope he believed in hope*, he believed the promise of God concerning a thing in itself very improbable: But it is no commendation at all to believe the things which we have seen, because they admit of no manner of dispute; no objection can be offered to shake our assent, unless we will run to the extremity of scepticism; for if we will believe any thing at all, we must yield to the evidence of sense. This does so violently enforce our assent, that there can be no virtue in such a faith.

S E R M.

X. And as this would take away the virtue of faith; so it would very much lessen that of our obedience. It is hardly to be imagined; that any man who had seen the blessed condition of good men in another world, and been an eye-witness of the intolerable torments of sinners, should ever after be tempted knowingly to do any thing that would deprive him of that happiness, or bring him *into that place of torment*. Such a sight could not chuse but affect a man as long as he lived; and leave such impressions upon his mind, of the indispensable necessity of a holy life, and of the infinite danger of a wicked course, that we might sooner believe that all men in the world should conspire to kill one another, than that such a man, by consenting to any deliberate act of sin should wilfully throw himself into those flames: No, his mind would be continually haunted with those furies he had seen tormenting sinners in another world, and the fearful shrieks and outcries of miserable souls would be perpetually ringing in his ears; and the man would have so lively and terrible imagination of the danger he was running himself upon, that no temptation would be strong enough to conquer his fears, and to make him careless of his life and actions, after he had once seen how *fearful a thing it was to fall into the hands of the living God*: So that in this case, the reason of mens obedience would be so violent, that the virtue of it must be very little; for what praise is due to any man, not to do those things which none but a perfect mad man would do? for certainly that man must be beside himself, that could by any temptation be seduced to live a wicked life, after he had seen the state of good and bad men in the other world; the glorious rewards of holiness and virtue, and the dismal event of a vicious and sinful course. God hath designed this life for the trial of our virtue, and the exercise of our obedience; but there would hardly be any place for this, if there were a free and easy passage for us into the other world,

world, to see the true state of things there. What S E R M. argument would it be of any man's virtue to forbear X. sinning after he had been in *hell*, and seen the miserable end of sinners? But I proceed to the

III. And *last* observation; namely, that notwithstanding faith be an inferiour degree of assent, yet it is a principle of sufficient force and power to govern our lives. *We walk by faith.* Now that the belief of any thing may have its effect upon us, it is requisite that we be satisfied of these two things.

1. Of the certainty, and 2. Of the great concernment of the thing. For if the thing be altogether uncertain, it will not move us at all; we shall do nothing towards the obtaining of it, if it be good; nor for the avoiding and preventing of it, if it be evil: And if we are certain of the thing, yet if we apprehend it to be of no great moment and concernment, we shall be apt to slight it, as not worth our regard. But the rewards and punishments of another world, which the Gospel propounds to our faith, are fitted to work upon our minds, both upon account of the certainty and concernment of them. For,

1. We have sufficient assurance of the truth of these things, as much as we are well capable of in this state. Concerning things future and at a distance, we have the dictates of our reason arguing us into this persuasion, from the consideration of the justice of the divine providence, and from the promiscuous and unequal administration of things in this world; from whence wise men in all ages have been apt to conclude that there will be another state of things after this life, wherein rewards and punishments shall be equally distributed. We have the general consent of mankind in this matter; And to assure us, that these reasonings are true, we have a most credible revelation of these things, God having sent his Son from heaven to declare it to us, and given us a sensible demonstration of the thing, in his resurrection from the dead, and his visible ascension into heaven; so that there is



SERMON. no kind of evidence wanting, that the thing is capable of, but only our own sense and experience of these things, of which we are not capable in this present state. And there is no objection against all this, but what will bring all things into uncertainty, which do not come under our senses, and which we ourselves have not seen.

Nor is there any considerable interest to hinder men from the belief of these things, or to make them hesitate about them. For as for the other world, if at last there should prove to be no such thing, our condition after death will be the same with the condition of those who disbelieve these things; because all will be extinguished by death: But if things fall out otherwise (as most undoubtedly they will) and our souls after this life do pass into a state of everlasting happiness or misery, then our great interest plainly lies, in preparing ourselves for this state; and there is no other way to secure the great concerns of another world, but by believing those things to be true, and governing all the actions of our lives by this belief. And as for the interests of *this* life, they are but short and transitory, and consequently of no consideration in comparison of the things which are eternal; and yet (as I have often told you) setting aside the case of persecution for religion, there is no real interest of this world, but it may be as well promoted and pursued to as great advantage, nay, usually to a far greater, by him that believes these things, and lives accordingly, than by any other person: For the belief of the rewards and punishments of another world, is the greatest motive and encouragement to virtue; and as all vice is naturally attended with some temporal inconvenience, so the practice of all christian virtues doth in its own nature tend both to the welfare of particular persons, and to the peace and prosperity of mankind.

But that which ought to weigh very much with us, is, that we have abundantly more assurance of the recompence

recompence of another world, than we have in many things in this world, which yet have a greater influence upon our actions, and govern the lives of the most prudent and considerate men. Men generally hazard their lives and estates upon terms of greater uncertainty than the assurance which we have of another world. Men venture to take physick upon *probable* grounds of the integrity and skill of their physician; and yet the want of either of these may hazard their lives: And men take physick upon greater odds; for it certainly causeth pain and sickness, and doth but uncertainly procure and recover health; the patient is sure to be made sick, but not certain to be made well; and yet the danger of being worse, if not of dying on the one hand, and the hope of success and recovery on the other, make this hazard and trouble reasonable. Men venture their whole estates to places which they never saw; and that there are such places, they have only the concurrent testimony and agreement of men; nay, perhaps have only spoken with them that have spoken with those that have been there. No merchant ever insisted upon the evidence of a miracle to be wrought, to satisfy him that there were such places as the *East* and *West-Indies*, before he would venture to trade thither: And yet *this* assurance God hath been pleased to give the world of a state beyond the grave, and of a blessed immortality in another life.

Now, what can be the reason that so slender evidence, so small a degree of assurance will serve to encourage men to seek after the things of this world with great care and industry; and yet a great deal more will not suffice to put them effectually upon looking after the great concerns of another world, which are infinitely more considerable? No other reason of this can be given, but that men are partial in their affections towards these things. It is plain they have not the same love for God and religion, which they have for this world and the advantages of it;

S E R M. it ; and therefore it is, that a less degree of assurance

X. will engage them to seek after the one, than the other ; and yet the reason is much stronger on the other side : For the greater the benefit and good is, which is offered to us, we should be the more eager to seek after it, and should be content to venture upon less probability. Upon *excessive* odds a man would venture upon very small hopes ; for a *mighty* advantage, a man would be content to run a great hazard of his labour and pains upon little assurance. Where a man's life is concerned, every suspicion of danger will make a man careful to avoid it. And will nothing affright men from hell, unless God carry them thither, and shew them the place of torments, and the flames of that fire which *shall never be quenched* ?

I do not speak this, as if these things had not abundant evidence ; I have shewn that they have ; but to convince men how unreasonable and cruelly partial they are about the concernments of their souls, and their eternal happiness.

2. Supposing these things to be real and certain, they are of infinite concernment to us. For what can concern us more, than that eternal and unchangeable state, in which we must be fixed and abide for ever ? If so vast a concern will not move us, and have no influence upon the government of our lives and actions, we do not deserve the name of reasonable creatures. What consideration can be set before men, who are not touched with the sense of so great an interest, as that of our happy or miserable being to all eternity ? Can we be so solicitous and careful about the concernment of a few days ; and is it nothing to us what becomes of us for ever ? Are we so tenderly concerned to avoid poverty and disgrace, persecution and suffering in this world ; and shall we not much more *flee from the wrath which is to come*, and endeavour *to escape the damnation of hell* ? Are the slight and transitory enjoyments of this world, worth so much thought and care ? And is an eternal inheritance



in the heavens, not worth the looking after? As there S E R M.  
is no proportion betwixt the things which are tem- X.  
poral, and the things which are eternal; so we ought   
in all reason to be infinitely more concern'd for the one  
than for the other.

The proper inference from all this discourse is, that we would endeavour to strengthen in our selves this great principle of a christian life, the belief of another world, by representing to our selves all those arguments and considerations which may confirm us in this persuasion. The more reasonable our faith is, and the surer grounds it is built upon, the more firm it will abide, when it comes to the trial, against all the impressions of temptations, and assaults of persecution. If our faith of another world be only a strong imagination of these things, *as soon as tribulation arise, it will wither; because it hath no root in itself.* Upon this account the Apostle so often exhorts Christians, to endeavour *to be established in the truth, to be rooted and grounded in the faith*, that when persecution comes, they may *continue stedfast and unmoveable*. This firmness of our belief will have a great influence upon our lives: If we be *stedfast and unmoveable* in our persuasion of these things, we shall be *abundant in the work of the Lord*. The Apostle joins these together, *1 Cor. 15. 58. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, Stedfast and unmoveable*, in what? In the belief of a blessed resurrection; which the more firmly any man believes, the more active and industrious will he be in the work and service of God.

And that our faith may have a constant and powerful influence upon our lives, we should frequently revolve in our minds the thoughts of another world, and of that vast eternity which we shall shortly launch into. The great disadvantage of the arguments fetched from another world, is this, that these things

S E R M. are at a distance from us, and not sensible to us, and  
 X. therefore we are not apt to be so affected with them;  
 present and sensible things weigh down all other considerations. And therefore to ballance this disadvantage, we should often have these thoughts in our minds, and inculcate upon ourselves the certainty of these things, and the infinite concernment of them; we should reason thus with ourselves; if these things be true, and will certainly be, why should they not be to me, as if they were actually present? Why should not I always live, as if heaven were open to my view, and *I saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God*, with crowns of glory in his hands, ready to be set upon the heads of all those who continue faithful and obedient to him? And why should I not be as much afraid to commit any sin, as if *hell were naked before me*, and I saw the astonishing miseries of the damned?

Thus we should, by frequent meditation, represent these great things to ourselves, and bring them nearer to our minds, and oppose to the present temptations of sense, the great and endless happiness and misery of the other world. And if we would but thus exercise ourselves about *the things which are not seen*, and make eternity familiar to ourselves, by a frequent meditation of it, we should be very little moved with present and sensible things; we should *walk and live* by faith, as the men of the world do by *sense*, and be more serious and earnest in the pursuit of our great and everlasting interest, than they are in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments, and should make it the great business of this present and temporal life, to secure a future and eternal happiness.

# S E R M O N. XI.

The Danger of Apostasy from the true Religion.

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H E B. X. 38.

*But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

**T**HE great design of this epistle (whoever S E R M.  
XI.  
was the author of it, which I shall not now inquire into) is plainly this, to confirm the *Jews*, who were but newly converted to *Christianity*, in the stedfast profession of that faith which they had embraced, and to arm them against that temptation which Christians were then exposed to, *viz.* the fierce and cruel persecution which threatned those of that profession.

And to this purpose he represents to them the excellency of that religion, above any other former revelation, that God hath made of himself to the world, both in respect of the author and revealer of it, who was the Son of God, and in respect of the revelation itself; which as it contains better and more perfect directions for a good life, so likewise more powerful and effectual motives thereto, better promises, and more terrible threatnings, than were annexed to the observation of the *Jewish* law, or clearly and certainly discoverable by the light of nature. From these considerations, he earnestly persuades them, all along throughout this epistle, to continue constant in the profession of this faith, and not to suffer themselves to be frightened out of it by the ter-

FOR



S E R M. for of persecution, chap. 2. ver. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip;* and chap. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it;* and ver. 23. of this chapter. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering;* and to encourage them to constancy, he sets before them the glorious rewards and recompences of the Gospel, ver 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence, τὴν περὶ ἡμῶν ἐλευθερίαν, your free and open profession of christianity, which hath great recompence of reward.*

And then on the other hand, to deter them from apostasy from this profession he represents to them the horrible danger of it here in the text, *But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

I shall briefly explain the words, and then prosecute that which I mainly intend in them. *If any man draw back, Ἐάν τις ἀποστείλῃται:* These words with the foregoing, are cited out of the Prophet *Habbakuk*, chap. 2. ver. 3, 4. and they are cited by the Apostle, according to the translation of the LXXII, which differs somewhat from the *Hebrew*; and the difference ariseth from the various readings of the *Hebrew* word, which is render'd by the LXXII, to draw back; but by the change of a letter, signifies to be lifted up, as we render it in the Prophet; but however that be, the Apostle follows the translation of the LXXII, and accommodates it to his purpose. *Ἐάν τις ἀποστείλῃται, if any man draw back;* the word signifies to keep back, to withdraw, to sneak and slink away out of fear, to fail or faint in any enterprize: And thus this word is render'd in the new testament. *Acts 20, 20. οὐδὲν ἀπέσχεμαι ὑμῖν, I did not withhold or keep back any thing that was profitable for you;* and so it is said of St. Peter, Gal. 2. 12. ἀπέσχετο ἑαυτὸν, he slunk away, or withdrew himself, fearing them of the circumcision; and the *Hebrew* word which is here render'd

der'd by the LXXII. *to draw back*, is render'd else- S E R M.  
where *ἐκλείπειν*, which is *to fail*, or *faint*; from all XI.  
which it appears, that by *drawing back*, the Apostle  
here means, mens quitting their profession of christi-  
anity, and sinking out of it, for fear of suffering  
for it.

*My soul shall have no pleasure in him*: These words  
are plainly a *μίσους*, and less is said than is meant;  
for the meaning is, that God will be extremely dis-  
pleased with them, and punish them very severely.  
The like figure to this, you have *Psal. 5. 4. Thou*  
*art not a God that has pleasure in wickedness*, which  
in the very next verse is explained, by his hatred  
and detestation of those who are guilty of it, *Thou*  
*batest all the workers of iniquity*. So that the plain  
sense of the words is this, that apostasy from the pro-  
fession of God's true religion, is a thing highly pro-  
voking to him, and will be most severely punished  
by him.

In speaking to this argument, I shall consider these  
four things.

I. The nature of this sin of apostasy from reli-  
gion.

II. The several steps and degrees of it.

III. The heinousness of it.

IV. The great danger of it, and the terrible pu-  
nishment it exposeth men to. And when I have  
spoken to these, I shall conclude all with a short ex-  
hortation, *to hold fast the profession of our faith with-*  
*out wavering*.

I. We will consider the nature of this sin of apo-  
stasy from religion: And it consists in forsaking or  
renouncing the profession of religion, whether it be  
by an open declaration in words, or a vital declara-  
tion of it by our actions; for it comes all to one in  
the sight of God, and the different manner of doing  
it, does not alter the nature of the thing. He in-  
deed that renounceth religion by an open declaration  
in words, offers the greatest and boldest defiance to

S E R M. it; but he is likewise an apostate, who silently with-  
 XI. draws himself from the profession of it, who quits it  
 for his interest, or for fear disowns it and sneaks out  
 of the profession of it, and forsakes the communion  
 of those who own it. Thus *Demas* was an apostate,  
 in quitting christianity for some worldly interest.  
*Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world,*  
*faith St. Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 10.*

And those whom our Saviour describes, *Matth.*  
*13. 20, 21. who received the word into stony ground,*  
*were apostates out of fear, they heard the word, and*  
*with joy received it; but having no root in themselves,*  
*they endured but for a while, and when tribulation and*  
*persecution ariseth because of the word, presently they*  
*fall off.*

And there is likewise a partial apostasy from christianity, when some fundamental article of it is denied, whereby, in effect and by consequence, the whole christian-faith is overthrown. Of this *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* were guilty, of whom the Apostle says, that they *erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection was past already, and thereby overthrew the faith of some, 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18.* that is, they turned the resurrection into an allegory, and did thereby really destroy a most fundamental article of the christian religion.

So that to make a man an apostate, it is not necessary that a man should solemnly renounce his baptism and declare christianity to be false; there are several other ways whereby a man might bring himself under this guilt, as by a silent quitting of his religion, and withdrawing himself from the communion of all that profess it; by denying an essential doctrine of christianity; by undermining the great end and design of it, by teaching doctrines which directly tend to encourage men in impenitence, and a wicked course of life; nay, to authorize all manner of impiety and vice, in telling men that whatever they do they cannot sin; for which the primitive  
 Christians



Christians did look upon the *Gnosticks* as no better than apostates from christianity; and tho' they retained the name of Christians, yet not to be truly and really so. And there is likewise a partial apostasy from the christian religion; of which I shall speak under the

S E R M.  
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IId. Head I proposed, which was, to consider the several sorts and degrees of apostasy. The highest of all, is the renouncing and forsaking of christianity, or of some essential part of it, which is a virtual apostasy from it: But there are several tendencies towards this, which they who are guilty of, are in some degree guilty of this sin. As,

1. Indifferency in religion, and want of all sort of concernment for it; when a man, though he never quitted his religion, yet is so little concerned for it, that a very small occasion or temptation would make him do it; he is contented to be reckoned in the number of those who profess it, so long as it is the fashion, and he finds no great inconvenience by it; but is so indifferent in his mind about it, (like *Gallio who minded none of those things*) that he can turn himself into any other shape, when his interest requires it; so that though he never actually deserted it, yet he is a kind of apostate, in the preparation and disposition of his mind: And to such persons, that title which *Solomon* gives to some, may fitly enough be applied, they are *backsliders in heart*.

2. Another tendency to this sin, and a great degree of it, is withdrawing from the publick marks and testimonies of the profession of religion, by forsaking the assemblies of Christians for the worship and service of God, to withdraw our selves from those, for fear of danger or suffering, is a kind of denial of our religion. And this was the case of some in the Apostles time, when persecution grew hot, and the open profession of christianity dangerous; to avoid this danger, many appeared not in the as-

S E R M. assemblies of Christians, for fear of being observed and  
 XI. brought into trouble for it. This the Apostle taxeth  
 some for, in this chapter, and speaketh of it as a  
 letting go our profession, and a kind of deserting of  
 christianity, v. 23, 25. *Let us hold fast the profession  
 of our faith without wavering, not forsaking the assembling  
 of our selves together, as the manner of some is.*  
 He doth not say, they had quitted their profession,  
 but they had but a loose hold of it, and were silently  
 stealing away from it.

3. A light temper of mind, which easily receives  
 impressions from those who lie in wait to deceive and  
 seduce men from the truth. When men are not well  
 rooted and established in religion, they are apt to be  
*inveigled by the crafty insinuations of seducers, to be  
 moved with every wind of doctrine, and to be easily  
 shaken in mind,* by every trifling piece of sophistry  
 that is confidently obtruded upon them for a weighty  
 argument.

Now this is a temper of mind which disposeth  
 men to apostasy, and renders them an easy prey to  
 every one that takes a pleasure and pride in making  
 profelytes. It is true, indeed, a man should always  
 have a mind ready to entertain truth, when it is fairly  
 proposed to him: But the main things of religion  
 are so plainly revealed, and lie so obvious to every  
 ordinary capacity, that every man may discern them;  
 and when he hath once entertained them, ought to  
 be stedfast and unmoveable in them, and not suffer  
 himself to be whiffled out of them by an insignificant  
 noise about the infallibility of a visible church; much  
 less ought he to be moved by any man's uncharita-  
 bleness and positiveness, in damning all that are not  
 of his mind.

There are some things so very plain, not only in  
 scripture, but the common reason of mankind, that  
 no subtilty of discourse, no pretended authority, or  
 even infallibility of any church, ought to stagger us  
 in the least about them; as that we ought not, or  
 can-

cannot believe any thing in direct contradiction to sense and reason; that the people ought to read and study the holy scriptures; and to serve God and pray to him in a language which they understand; that they ought to receive the sacrament as our Saviour instituted and appointed it, that is, in both kinds; that it can neither be our duty, nor lawful to do that which God hath forbidden, as he hath done the worship of images in the second commandment, as plainly as words can do it. Upon any one of these points, a man would fix his foot, and stand alone against the whole world.

4. Another degree of apostasy is, a departure from the purity of the christian doctrine and worship, in a gross and notorious manner. This is a partial, though not a total apostasy from the christian religion, and there have been, and are still some in the world, who are justly charged with this degree of apostasy from religion; namely such, as tho' they retain and profess the belief of all the articles of the christian faith, and worship *the only true God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ*, yet have greatly perverted the christian religion, by superinducing, and adding new articles of faith, and gross corruptions and superstitions in worship, and imposing upon men the belief and practice of these, as necessary to salvation. And St. Paul is my warrant for this censure, who chargeth those who added to the christian religion, the necessity of circumcision, and observing the law of Moses, and thereby perverted the Gospel of Christ, as guilty in some degree of apostasy from christianity; for he calls it, *preaching another Gospel*, Gal. 1. 7, 8. *There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ: But tho' we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you, than that which we have preached, let him be accursed.* And those who were seduced by these teachers, he chargeth them with having in some sort quitted the Gospel of Christ, and embraced



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another Gospel, ver. 6. *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel.* So that they who thus pervert and corrupt the christian doctrine or worship, are plainly guilty of a partial apostasy from christianity; and they who quit the purity of the christian doctrine and worship, and go over to the communion of those who have thus perverted christianity, are in a most dangerous state, and in the judgment of St. Paul, are in some sort *removed unto another Gospel.* I shall now proceed in the

III. Place, to consider the heinousness of this sin. And it will appear to be very heinous, if we consider, what an affront it is to God, and how great a contempt of him. When God hath revealed his will to mankind, and sent no less a person than *his own Son* out of his own *bosom* to do it, and hath given such testimonies to him from heaven, by *signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost*; when he hath transmitted down to us, so faithful a record of this revelation, and of the miracles wrought to confirm it, in the books of the holy scriptures; and when we our selves have so often declared our firm belief of this revelation: Yet after all this to fall from it, and deny it, or any part of it, or to embrace doctrines and practices plainly contrary to it; this certainly cannot be done without the greatest affront and contempt of the testimony of God himself; for it is in effect, and by interpretation, to declare that either we do not believe what God says, or that we do not fear what he can do. So St. John tells us, *1 Ep. 5. 10. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record which God hath given of his Son.*

And all along in this epistle to the *Hebrews*, the Apostle sets himself to aggravate this sin; calling it *an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God*, chap. 3. 12. And he frequently calls it so, *ἀποστασία* and by way of eminency, as being of all sins the greatest and

and most heinous. chap. 10. 26. *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth.* S E R M. XI.

That the Apostle here speaks of the sin of apostasy, is plain from the whole scope of his discourse; for having exhorted them before, ver. 23. *to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together,* he immediately adds, *for if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth;* that is, if we fall off from christianity, after we have embraced it. And chap. 12. 1. *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us,* that is, the great sin of apostasy from religion, to which they were then so strongly tempted by that fierce persecution which attended it; and therefore he adds, *let us run with patience the race which is set before us,* that is, let us arm our selves with patience against the sufferings we are like to meet with in our christian course. To oppose the truth, and resist the clear evidence of it, is a great sin, and men are justly condemned for it. John 3. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light:* But to desert the truth after we have been convinced of it, to fall off from the profession of it after we have embraced it, is a much greater sin. Opposition to the truth, may proceed in a great measure from ignorance and prejudice, which is a great extenuation; and therefore St. Paul tells us, that after all his violent persecution of christianity, *he found mercy because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief.* To revolt from the truth, after we have made profession of it, *after we have known the way of righteousness, to turn from the holy commandment;* this is the great aggravation. The Apostle makes wilfulness, an usual ingredient in the sin of apostasy, *if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth.*

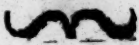
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And as this sin is one of the greatest affronts to God, so it is the highest and most effectual disparagement of religion: For it is not so much considered, what the enemies of religion speak against it, because *they speak evil of the things which they knew not*, and of which they have had no tryal and experience; but he that falls off from religion, after he hath made profession of it, declares to the world, that he hath tryed it, and dislikes it, and pretends to leave it, because he hath not found that truth and goodness in it which he expected, and upon long experience of it, sees reason to prefer another religion before it. So that nothing can be more despiteful to religion than this, and more likely to bring it into contempt; and therefore the Apostle (ver. 29. of this chapter) calls it *a trampling under foot the Son of God, and making the blood of the covenant a profane thing, and offering despite to the spirit of grace*: For we cannot put a greater scorn upon the Son of God, who revealed this doctrine to the world; nor upon his blood, which was shed to confirm and seal the truth of it; and upon the Holy Ghost, who came down in miraculous gifts to give testimony to it; than notwithstanding all this, to renounce this doctrine, and to forsake this religion. But we shall yet farther see the heinousness of this sin, in the terrible punishment it exposeth men to; which was the

IV. And *last* thing I proposed to consider: And this is represented to us in a most terrible manner, not only in this epistle, but in other places of scripture. This sin is placed in the highest rank of pardonable sins, and next to the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour declares to be absolutely unpardonable. And indeed the scripture speaks very doubtfully of the pardonableness of this sin, as being near a-kin to that against the Holy Ghost, being said to be an *offering despite to the spirit of grace*. In the 6th chapter of this epistle, ver. 4, 5, 6. the Apostle speaks in a very severe manner, concerning the state of



of those, who had apostatized from christianity, after-S E R M.  
the solemn profession of it in baptism; *It is impossible* XI.  
*for those who were once enlightned* (that is baptized)   
*and have tasted of the heavenly gift,* (that is regeneration) *and were made partakers of the holy Ghost;* and  
*have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the*  
*world to come,* (that is, have been instructed in the  
christian religion, and endowed with the miraculous  
powers of the gospel-age, for the Jews used to  
call the age of the *Messias, seculum futurum,* or,  
*the world to come*) *it is impossible for those to be renewed*  
*again unto repentance;* where the least we can under-  
stand by *impossible* is, that it is extremely difficult;  
for so the word *impossible* is sometimes used; as when  
our Saviour says, *it is impossible for a rich man to enter*  
*into the kingdom of heaven.* And Ch. 10. 26. the  
Apostle speaking of the same thing, says *if we sin*  
*willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the*  
*truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin;* that is,  
they who renounce christianity, since they reject the  
only way of expiation, *there remains no more sacrifice*  
*for their sins.*

St. Peter likewise expresseth himself very severely  
concerning this sort of persons, 2 Epist. 2. 20, 21.  
*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world,*  
*through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus*  
*Christ,* (that is, after they have been brought from  
heathenism to christianity) *they are entangled therein*  
*again, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them*  
*than the beginning.* He seems loth to say how sad the  
condition of such persons is; but this he tells them,  
that it is much worse than when they were heathens  
before; and he gives the reason, *for it had been better*  
*for them not to have known the way of righteousness,*  
*than after they have known it, to turn from the holy*  
*commandment delivered unto them.* And St. John calls  
this sin of apostasy, *the sin unto death;* and tho' he  
do not forbid Christians to pray for them that are  
guilty of it; yet he will not say, that they should  
pray

S E R M. pray for them, 1 Epist. 5. 16. If any man see his  
 XI. brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask,  
 and he shall give him life, for them that sin not unto  
 death; there is a sin unto death, I do not say, that he  
 shall pray for it. Now that by this *sin unto death*, the  
 Apostle means apostasy from the christian religion to  
 idolatry, is most probable from what follows, ver. 18.  
*we know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not,*  
 (that is, this sin unto death) *but he that is begotten of*  
*God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him*  
*not,* (that is, he is preserved from idolatry, unto  
 which the devil had seduced so great a part of mankind)  
*and we know that we are of God, and the whole world,*  
*ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ καί τῳ, is under the dominion of that wicked one,*  
 (viz. the devil, whom the scripture elsewhere calls  
 the God of this world;) and we know that the Son of  
 God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that  
 we may know him that is true, (that is, hath brought  
 us from the worship of false Gods to the knowledge  
 and worship of the true God;) and then he concludes,  
*little children, keep your selves from idols;* which cau-  
 tion hath no manner of dependence upon what went  
 before, unless we understand *the sin unto death*, in this  
 sense; and it is the more probable, that it is so to be  
 understood, because apostasy is so often in this epistle  
 to the Hebrews called *the sin*, by way of eminency,  
 as it is here, by St. John, *whosoever is born of God,*  
*sinneth not.*

So that at the very best, the scripture speaks doubt-  
 fully of the pardon of this sin; however, that the  
 punishment of it, unrepented of, shall be very dread-  
 ful. It seems to be mildly exprest here in the text, *If*  
*any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in*  
*him:* But it is the more severe, for being exprest so  
 mildly, according to the intention of the figure here  
 used; and therefore in the next words, this expression  
 of God's taking no pleasure in such persons, is ex-  
 plained by their utter ruin and perdition; *But we are*  
 not

not of them that draw back unto perdition. And in several parts of this epistle, there are very severe passages to this purpose; chap. 2. 2, 3. *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? And chap. 10. 26, 27. If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary. He that despised Moses's law, dyed without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, that hath trodden under foot the Son of God? &c. For we know him who hath said, vengeance is mine, I will recompence saith the Lord: And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. What can be more severe and terrible than these expressions?*

I will mention but one text more, and that is *Rev. 21. 8.* where in the catalogue of great sinners, those who apostatize from religion, out of fear, do lead the van: *He that overcometh shall inherit all things,* (which is elsewhere in this book exprest, by continuing faithful unto the death;) *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The fearful, and unbelievers, and lyars, that is, they who out of fear relapse into infidelity, and abide not in the truth, shall be reckoned in the first rank of offenders, and be punished accordingly.*

And thus I have done with the four things I propounded to speak to, from these words; the nature of apostasy; the several steps and degrees of it; the heinous nature of this sin; the danger of it, and the terrible punishment it exposeth men to.

And



S E R M.

XI. And is there any need now, to exhort men to hold fast the profession of faith when the danger of drawing back is so evident, and so terrible? or is there any reason and occasion for it? certainly there is no great danger amongst us, of men's apostatizing from christianity, and turning *Jews*, or *Turks*, or *Heathens*; I do not think there is, but yet for all that, we are not free from the danger of apostasy; there is great danger, not of men's apostatizing from one religion to another, but from religion to infidelity and atheism; and of this worst kind of apostasy of all other, I wish the age we live in had not afforded us too many instances. It is greatly to be lamented, that among those who have profess'd christianity, any should be found that should make it their endeavour to undermine the great principles of all religion; the belief of a God, and his providence; and of the immortality of the souls of men; and a state of rewards and punishments after this life; and to bring the most serious matters in the world into contempt, and to turn them into jest and raillery. This is not only a renouncing of christianity, the religion which God hath revealed, but even of the religion which is born with us, and the principles and notions which God hath planted in every man's mind: This is an impiety of the first magnitude, and not to be mentioned without grief and horror; and this, it is to be feared, hath had a great hand in those great calamities which our eyes have seen; and I pray God it do not draw down still more and greater judgments upon this nation: But I hope there are none here that need to be cautioned against this horrible impiety, and highest degree of *apostasy from the living God*. That which people are much more in danger of, is apostasy from the purity of the christian doctrine and worship, so happily recovered by a regular reformation, and established among us by all the authority that laws, both ecclesiastical and civil, can give it; and which, in truth,

truth, is no other than the ancient and primitive christianity ; I say, a defection from this, to those gross errors and superstitions, which the reformation had pared off, and freed us from. I do not say, that this is a total apostasy from christianity ; but it is a partial apostasy and defection, and a very dangerous one ; and that those, who, *after they have received the knowledge of the truth*, fall off from it into those errors and corruptions, are highly guilty before God, and their condition certainly worse, and more dangerous, than of those who are brought up in those errors and superstitions, and never knew better ; for there are terrible threatnings in scripture against those who fall away from the truth, which they once embraced, and were convinced of ; *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, &c. and if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

S E R M O N  
X I  


God considers every man's advantages and opportunities of knowledge, and their disadvantages likewise ; and makes all reasonable allowances for them ; and for men to continue in the errors they have been always brought up in, or, which comes much to one, in errors which they were led into by principles easily infused into them, before they were in any measure competent judges of those matters ; I say for such persons to continue in those errors, and to oppose and reject the contrary truths, against which, by their education, they have received so strong and violent a prejudice, this may be in a great degree excusable, and find pardon with God, upon a general repentance for all sins, both known and unknown, and cannot be reasonably charged with the guilt of this great sin of apostasy : But not to abide in the truth, after we have entertained and professed it, having sufficient means and advantages of knowing it, hath no excuse.

I would not be rash in condemning particular persons of any society or communion of Christians, provided they be sincerely devout, and just, and sober,

S E R M. to the best of their knowledge; I had much rather  
 XI. leave them to God, whose mercies are great, than to  
 pass an uncharitable censure upon them, as to their  
 eternal state and condition: But the case is far other-  
 wise, where the opportunities of knowledge are af-  
 forded to men, and *men love darkness rather than light*;  
 for they who have the means and advantages of *know-  
 ing their master's will*, are answerable to God as if  
 they had known it; because if they had not been  
 grossly negligent, and wanting to themselves, they  
 might have known it.

And this, I fear, is the case of the generality of  
 those who have been bred up to years of considerati-  
 on and choice in the reformed religion, and forsake  
 it; because they do it without sufficient reason, and  
 there are invincible objections against it: They do it  
 without sufficient reason; because every one amongst  
 us, knows, or may know upon very little enquiry,  
 that we hold all the articles of the faith, which are  
 contained in the ancient creeds of the christian church,  
 and into which all Christians are baptized; that we  
 inculcate upon men the necessity of a good life, and  
 of sincere repentance, and perfect contrition for our  
 sins, such as is followed with real reformation and  
 amendment of our lives, and that, without this, no  
 man can be saved by any device whatsoever.

Now what reason can any man have, to question  
 whether he may be saved in that faith which saved  
 the first Christians, and by believing the twelve arti-  
 cles of the Apostles creed, though he cannot swallow  
 the twelve articles which are added to it in the creed  
 of Pope *Pius IV*, every one of which, besides many  
 and great corruptions and superstitions in worship,  
 are so many and invincible objections against the com-  
 munion of the *Roman* church, as I could particularly  
 shew, if it had not been already done, in so many  
 learned treatises upon this argument? What is there  
 then, that should move any reasonable man to forsake  
 the



the communion of our church, and to quit the re-  
formed religion?

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There are three things chiefly with which they endeavour to amuse and affright weaker minds.

1. A great noise of infallibility, which, they tell us, is so excellent a means to determine and put an end to all differences. To which I shall at present only object this prejudice; that there are not wider and hotter differences among us, about any thing whatsoever, than are amongst them, about this admirable means of ending all differences; as, where this infallibility is seated, that men may know how to have recourse to it, for the ending of differences.

2. They endeavour to fright men with the danger of schism. But every man knows, that the guilt of schism lies at their door, who impose sinful articles of communion; and not upon them, who, for fear of sinning against God, cannot submit to those articles; which we have done, and still are ready to make good, to be the case betwixt us and the church of *Rome*. But,

3. The terrible engine of all is, their positive and confident damning of all that live and die out of communion of their church. This I have fully spoken to upon another occasion, and therefore shall only say at present, that every man ought to have better thoughts of God, than to believe, that he, *who delighteth not in the death of sinners, and would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,* will confirm the sentence of such uncharitable men, as take upon them to condemn men for those things, for which our Saviour in his Gospel condemns no man. And of all things in the world, one would think that the uncharitableness of any church should be an argument to no man to run into its communion.

I shall conclude with the Apostle's exhortation, verse the 23d of this chapter, *let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; and provoke one another*

*another to charity and good works ; and so much the more, because the day approacheth, in which God will judge the faith and lives of men by Jesus Christ, according to his Gospel.* ✕

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*The first  
Sermon on  
this text.*

## S E R M O N XII.

Of Self-denial and Suffering for Christ's Sake.

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M A T T H. XVI. 24.

*Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

S E R M.  
XII.

**T**HEN said Jesus to his Disciples, that is, upon occasion of his former discourse with them, wherein he had acquainted them with his approaching passion, that he must shortly go up to Jerusalem, and there suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and at last be put to death by them ; then said Jesus to his Disciples, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

*If any man will come after me, or follow me ; that is, if any man will be my disciple, and undertake the profession of my religion ; if any man chuse and resolve to be a Christian ; he must be so upon these terms, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me ; he must follow me in self-denial and suffering.*

In

In the handling of these words, I shall do these S E R M.  
four things. **XII.**

I. I shall consider the way and method which our Saviour useth in making profelytes, and gaining men over to his religion. He offers no manner of force and violence to compel them to the prefeſſion of his religion: but fairly offers it to their conſideration and choice, and tells them plainly upon what terms they muſt be his diſciples; and if they be contented and reſolved to ſubmit to theſe terms, well; if not, it is in vain to follow him any longer: *for they cannot be his diſciples.*

II. I ſhall endeavour to explain this duty of ſelf-denial, expreſſ'd in theſe words, *let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me.*

III. I ſhall conſider the ſtrict and indiſpenſable obligation of it, whenever we are called to it; *Without this we cannot be Chriſt's diſciples? If any will come after me, or be my diſciple, let him deny himſelf.*

IV. I ſhall endeavour to vindicate the reaſonableneſs of this precept of ſelf-denial and ſuffering for Chriſt, which at firſt appearance, may ſeem to be ſo very harſh and difficult; and I ſhall go over theſe particulars as briefly as I can.

I. We will conſider the way and method which our Saviour here uſeth in making profelytes, and gaining men over to his religion. He offers no manner of force and violence to compel men to the profeſſion of his religion; but fairly propoſeth it to their conſideration and choice, telling them plainly upon what terms they muſt be his diſciples; if they like them, and are content, and reſolved to ſubmit to them, well; he is willing to receive them, and own them for his diſciples: If not, it is in vain to follow him any longer: *For they cannot be his diſciples.* As, on the one hand, he offers them no worldly preferment and advantage to intice them into his religion, and to tempt them outwardly to profeſs what they do not inwardly believe; ſo, on the other hand, he does not hale and drag them by force, and awe them



S E R M. by the terrors of torture and death to sign the christi-  
 XII. an faith, tho' most undoubtedly true, and to confess  
 with their mouths, and subscribe with their hands, what they do not believe in their hearts. He did not obtrude his sacraments upon them, and plunge them into the water to baptize them, whether they would or no, and thrust the sacrament of bread into their mouths; as if men might be worthy receivers of that blessed sacrament, whether they receive it willingly or no.

Our blessed Saviour, the author and founder of our religion, made use of none of these ways of violence, so contrary to the nature of man, and of all religion, especially, of christianity, and fitted only to make men hypocrites, but not converts, he only says, *If any man will be my disciple*; he useth no arguments, but such as are spiritual, and proper to work upon the minds and consciences of men. *For as his kingdom was not of this world*, so neither are the motives and arguments to induce men to be his subjects, taken from this world; but from the endless rewards and punishments of another. *The weapons* which he made use of to subdue men to the obedience of faith, were not *carnal*; and yet they were *mighty through God*, to conquer the obstinacy and infidelity of men. This great and infallible teacher, who certainly came from God, all that he does, is to propose his religion to men, with such evidence and such arguments as are proper to convince men of the truth and goodness of it, and to persuade men to embrace it; and he acquaints them likewise with all the worldly disadvantages of it, and the hazards and sufferings that would attend it; and now if upon full consideration they will make his religion their free choice, and become his disciples, he is willing to receive them; if they will not, he understands the nature of religion better, than to go about to force it upon men, whether they will or no.

II. I shall endeavour to explain this duty or precept of self-denial, expressed in these words, *Let him deny himself, and take up his cross*. These are difficult terms,

terms, for a man to *deny himself*, and *take up his own cross*, that is, willingly to submit to all those sufferings which the malice of men may inflict for the sake of Christ and his religion. For this expression of *taking up one's cross*, is an allusion to the Roman custom, which was this, that he that was condemned to be crucified, was to take his cross upon his shoulders, and to carry it to the place of execution; this the *Jews* made our Saviour to do, as we read *John* 19. 17. till that he was ready to faint under it, and lest he should die away before he was nailed to the cross, they compelled *Simon* of *Syrene* to carry it for him, as is declared by the other Evangelists; and yet he tells them, *they that will be his disciples, must follow him, bearing their own cross*, that is, being ready (if God call them to it) to submit to the like sufferings for him and his truth, which he was shortly to undergo for the truth and their sakes.

But tho' these terms seem very hard; yet they are not unreasonable, as I shall shew in the conclusion of this discourse. Some indeed have made them so by extending this self-denial too far, attending more to the latitude of the words, than to the meaning and scope of our Saviour's discourse: For there is no doubt but that there are a great many things, which may properly enough be called self-denial, which yet our Saviour never intended to oblige Christians to. It is no doubt, great self-denial, for a man, without any necessity, to deny himself the necessary supports of life; for a man to starve and make away himself: But no man certainly ever imagined, that our Saviour ever intended by this precept to enjoin this kind of self-denial.

It is plain then, that there is no reason or necessity to extend this precept of our Saviour concerning self-denial, to every thing that may properly enough be called by that name; and therefore this precept must be limited by the plain scope and intendment of our Saviour's discourse; and no man can argue thus;

S E R M. thus ; *such a thing is self-denial, therefore our Saviour*

XII. *requires it of his disciples :* For our Saviour doth not here require all kinds of self-denial ; but limits it by his discourse to one certain kind, beyond which, self-denial is no duty by virtue of this text ; and therefore, for our clearer understanding of this precept of self-denial, I shall do these *two things*.

*First*, Remove some sorts of self-denial, which are instanced in by some, as intended in this precept.

*Secondly*, I shall shew what kind of self-denial that is, which our Saviour here intends.

*First*, There are several things brought under this precept of self-denial, which were never intended by our Saviour. I shall instance in two or three things, which are most frequently insisted upon, and some of them by very devout and well-meaning men ; as, that in matters of faith, we should deny and renounce our own senses and our reason ; nay, that we should be content to renounce our own eternal happiness, and be willing to be damned for the glory of God and the good of our brethren. But all these are so apparently and grossly unreasonable, that it is a wonder that any one should ever take them for instances of that self-denial which our Saviour requires ; especially considering, that in all his discourse of self-denial, he does not so much as glance at any of these instances, or any thing like to them.

1. Some comprehend under self-denial, the denying and renouncing our own senses in matters of faith. And if this could be made out to be intended by our Saviour in this precept, we needed not dispute any of the other instances. For he that renounceth the certainty of sense, so as not to believe what he sees, may after this renounce and deny any thing. For the evidence of sense is more clear and unquestionable than that of faith, as the scripture frequently intimates ; as *John* 20. 29. where our Saviour reproves *Thomas*, for refusing to believe his resurrection, upon any less evidence than that of sense ; *Because thou*  
hast



*hast seen, thou hast believed: Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed;* which plainly sup-  
 poseth the evidence of sense to be the highest and  
 clearest degree of evidence. So likewise that of St.  
 Paul, 2 Cor. 5. 7. *We walk by faith and not by sight;*  
 where the evidence of *faith*, as that which is more  
 imperfect and obscure, is opposed to that of *sight*, as  
 more clear and certain. So that to believe any arti-  
 cle of faith, in contradiction to the clear evidence of  
 sense, is contrary to the very nature of assent, which  
 always yields to the greatest and clearest evidence.

S E R M.  
 XII.

Besides that our belief of religion is *at last* resolv-  
 ed into the certainty of sense: So that by renouncing  
*that*, we destroy and undermine the very foundation  
 of our faith. One of the plainest and principal proofs  
 of the being of God (which is the first and funda-  
 mental article of all religion) relies upon the certainty  
 of sense, namely the frame of this visible world, by  
 the contemplation whereof we are led to the acknow-  
 ledgment of the invisible author of it. So St. Paul  
 tell us, Rom. 1. 20. *That the invisible things of God,*  
*from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being*  
*understood by the things which are made, even his eternal*  
*power and Godhead.*

And the great external evidence of the christian  
 religion, I mean miracles, is at last resolved into the  
 certainty of sense, without which we can have no as-  
 surance that any miracle was wrought for the confir-  
 mation of it.

And the knowledge likewise of the christian faith  
 is conveyed to us by our senses; the evidence where-  
 of if it be uncertain, takes away all certainty of faith.  
*How shall they believe,* saith St. Paul, Rom. 10. 14.  
*How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not*  
*heard?* And ver. 17. *So then faith cometh by hearing,*  
*and hearing by the word of God.* So that to deny  
 and renounce our senses in matters of faith, is to take  
 away the main pillar and foundation of it.

S E R M. 2. Others, almost with equal absurdity, would  
 XII. comprehend under our Saviour's precept of self-denial, the denying and renouncing of our reason in matters of faith. And this is self-denial with a witness, for a man to deny his own reason, for it is to deny himself to be a man. This surely is a very great mistake, and tho' the ground of it may be innocent; yet the consequences of it, and the discourses upon it, are very absurd.

The ground of the mistake is this. Men think they deny their own reason, when they assent to the revelation of God in such things, as their own reason could neither have discovered, nor is able to give the reason of: Whereas in this case, a man is so far from denying his own reason, that he does that which is most agreeable to it. For what more reasonable than to believe whatever we are sufficiently assur'd is reveal'd to us by God, who can neither be deceived himself, nor deceive us?

But tho' the ground of this mistake may be innocent, yet the consequences of it are most absurd and dangerous. For if we are to renounce our reason in matters of faith, then we are bound to believe without reason, which no man can do; or if he could, then faith would be unreasonable, and infidelity reasonable. So that this instance likewise of self-denial, to renounce and deny our own reason, as it is no where exprest, so it cannot reasonably be thought to be intended by our Saviour in this precept.

3. Nor doth this precept of self-denial require men to be content to renounce their own eternal happiness, and to be willing to be damned for the glory of God, and the good of their brethren. If this were the meaning of this precept, we might justly say, as the disciples did to our Saviour, in another case, *this is a hard saying, and who can bear it?* The very thought of this is enough to make human nature to tremble at its very foundation. For the deepest principle

ciple that God hath planted in our nature is *the de-* S E R M.  
*fire of our own preservation and happiness,* and into XII.  
 this the force of all laws, and the reason of all our duty is at last resolved.

From whence it plainly follows, that it can be no man's duty in any case to renounce his own happiness, and to be content to be for ever miserable ; because if once this be made a duty, there will be no argument left, to persuade any man to it. For the most powerful arguments, that God ever used, to persuade men to any thing, are the promise of eternal happiness, and the terror of everlasting torments : But if this were a man's duty, to be content to be miserable for ever, neither of these arguments would be of force sufficient to persuade a man to it.

The first of these, namely the promise of eternal happiness, could signifie nothing to him that is to be eternally miserable ; because if he be to be so, it is impossible that he should ever have the benefit of that promise ; and the threatning of eternal misery, could be no argument in this case ; because the duty is just as difficult, as the argument is powerful, and no man can be moved to submit to any thing that is grievous and terrible, but by something that is more terrible ; for if it be not, it is the same thing, whether he submit to it, or not ; and then no man can be content to be eternally miserable, only for the fear of being so ; for this would be for a man to run himself upon that very inconvenience which he is so much afraid of ; and 'tis madness for a man to die for fear of death. *Quis novus hic furor est, ne moriari, mori ?*

By this it plainly appears, how unreasonable it is to imagine, that by this precept of self-denial, our Saviour should require men to renounce everlasting happiness, and to be content to be miserable for ever, upon any account whatsoever ; because this were to suppose that God hath imposed that upon us as a duty, to oblige us whereto there can be no argument offer'd, that can be powerful enough.



S E R M. As for the glory of God, which is pretended to be  
 XII. the reason, it is an impossible supposition ; because it  
 cannot be for the glory of God, to make a creature  
 for ever miserable, that shall not by his wilful obsti-  
 nacy and impenitence deserve to be so. But this is  
 only cast in to add weight.

The other reason of the good and salvation of our  
 brethren, is the only consideration for which there  
 is any manner of colour from scripture ; and two in-  
 stances are alledged to this purpose, of two very ex-  
 cellent persons, that seem to have desired this,  
 and to have submitted to it ; and therefore  
 it is not so unreasonable as we would make it,  
 that our Saviour should enjoyn it as a duty. The in-  
 stances alledged are these. *Moses* desired of God that  
 he might be blotted out of the book of life, rather  
 than the people of *Israel*, whom he had conducted  
 and governed so long, should be destroyed : and in  
 the New Testament, *St. Paul* tells us, that *he could*  
*wish, that himself were accursed from Christ for his bre-*  
*thren* ; so earnest a desire had he of their salvation.

But neither of these instances are of force sufficient  
 to overthrow the reasons of my former discourse ; for  
 the desire of *Moses* amounts only to a submission to a  
 temporal death, that his nation might be saved from  
 a temporal ruin. For the expression of *blotting out of*  
*the book of life*, is of the same importance with those  
 phrases so frequently used in the Old Testament, *blot-*  
*ting out from the face of the earth*, and *blotting out one's*  
*name from under heaven*, which signifie no more than  
 temporal death and destruction ; and then *Moses's* wish  
 was reasonable and generous, and signifies no more,  
 but that he was willing, if God pleased, to die to save  
 the nation.

As for *St. Paul's* wish of *being accursed from Christ*,  
 it is plainly an hyperbolical expression of his great  
 affection to his country-men the *Jews*, and his zeal  
 for their salvation, which was so great, that if it had  
 been a thing reasonable and lawful, he could have  
 wish'd

wish'd the greatest evil to himself for their sakes ; and therefore it is observable, that it is not a positive and absolute wish, but express'd in the usual form of ushering in an hyperbole ; *I could wish* ; just as we are wont to say, when we would express a thing to the height, which is not fit, nor intended to be done by us, *I could wish, so or so ; I could even afford to do this or that* : which kind of speeches, no man takes for a strict and precise declaration of our minds, but for a figurative expression of a great passion.

And thus I have done with the *first* thing I propos'd for the explication of this precept, or duty of self-denial, which was to remove some sorts of self-denial, which by some are frequently instanced in, as intended by our Saviour in this precept. I proceed now to the

*Second* thing I propos'd, which is to declare positively, what that self-denial is, which our Saviour here intends ; and 'tis plainly this, and nothing but this ; that we should be willing to part with all earthly comforts and conveniences, to quit all our temporal interests and enjoyments, and even life itself, for the sake of Christ and his religion ; this our Saviour means, by *denying our selves* : And then (which is much the same with the other) that we should be willing to bear any temporal inconvenience and suffering upon the same account ; this is *to take up our cross and follow him*.

And that this is the full meaning of these two phrases, *of denying our selves*, and *taking up our cross*, will clearly appear, by considering the particular instances, which our Saviour gives of this self-denial, whenever he hath occasion to speak of it, by which you will plainly see, that these expressions amount to no more than I have said. Even here in the *text*, after our Saviour had told his Disciples, that *he that would come after him, must deny himself and take up his cross* ; It follows immediately, *For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life*

S E R M. *life for my sake, shall find it.* You see here, that he  
 XII. *instanceth in parting with our lives for him, as the*  
 highest piece of self-denial, which he requires. And  
 he himself elsewhere tells us, *that greater love than*  
*this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his*  
*friend.* Elsewhere he instanceth in quitting our near-  
 est relations for his sake, *Luke 14. 26, 27. If any*  
*man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother,*  
*and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and*  
*his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; and who so-*  
*ever doth not bear his cross and come after me, he cannot*  
*be my disciple.*

Which expressions, of *bating father and mother,*  
*and other relations, and even life it self,* are not to be  
 understood rigorously, and in an absolute sense, but  
 comparatively; for it is an *Hebrew* manner of speech,  
 to express that absolutely, which is meant only com-  
 paratively; and so our Saviour explains himself in a  
 parallel text to this, *Matth. 10. 37, 38. He that loveth*  
*father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me;*  
*he that loveth son or daughter, more than me, is not*  
*worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and fol-*  
*loweth after me, is not worthy of me.* In another place  
 our Saviour instanceth in quitting our estates for his  
 sake, *Matth. 19. 29. Every one that shall forsake*  
*houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or*  
*wife or children, or lands for my names sake;* by all  
 which it appears that this self-denial which our Saviour  
 here requires of his disciples, is to be extended no  
 farther, than to a readiness and willingness, whenever  
 God shall call us to it, to quit all our temporal interests  
 and enjoyments, and even life it self, the dearest of all  
 other, and to submit to any temporal inconvenience and  
 suffering for his sake. And thus much for the expli-  
 cation of the precept here in the *text.* I proceed in the

III<sup>d</sup>. place, to consider the strict and indispensable  
 obligation of this precept of self-denial, and suffering  
 for Christ and his truth, rather than to forsake and  
 renounce them. *If any man will come after me, or be*  
*my*



*my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*; that is, upon these terms he must be my disciple, in this manner he must follow me; and in the text I mentioned before, he declares again, that he that is not ready to quit all his relations and even life itself for his sake, *is not worthy of him, and cannot be his disciple*; and *whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after him, cannot be his disciple*; so that we cannot be the disciples of Christ, nor be worthy to be called by his name, if we be not ready thus to deny our selves for his sake: And not only so; but if for fear of the cross, or of any temporal sufferings, we should renounce and deny him, he threatens to deny us before his Father which is in heaven, (i. e.) to deprive us of eternal life, and to sentence us to everlasting misery, *Math. 10. 32. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven: But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven*; and *Mark 8. 38. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy Angels*: that is, when he cometh to judge the world: they shall not be able to stand in that judgment; for that by his *being ashamed of them*, is meant, that they shall be condemned by him, is plain from what goes before, ver. 26, 27. *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* and then it follows, *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words.*

But because some have the confidence to tell the world, that our Saviour doth not require thus much of Christians; but all that he obligeth us to, is to believe in him in our hearts, but not to make any outward profession of his religion, when the magistrate forbids it, and we are in danger of suffering for it; I shall therefore briefly examine what is pretended for

SERM. for so strange an assertion, and so directly contrary  
 XII. to the whole tenor of the Gospel, and to the express  
 words of our Saviour.

The author of the book called the *Leviathan* tells us, that we are not only not bound to confess Christ, but we are obliged to deny him, in case the magistrate requireth us so to do; his words are these; *What if the sovereign forbid us to believe in Christ?* he answers, *Such forbidding is of no effect, because belief and unbelief never follow mens commands. But what* (says he) *if we be commanded by our lawful prince to say with our tongues we believe not; must we obey such commands?* To this he answers, *that profession with the tongue is but an external thing, and no more than any other gesture, whereby we signifie our obedience, and wherein a Christian, holding firmly in his heart the faith of Christ, hath the same liberty which the Prophet Elisha allowed to Naaman. But what then* (says he) *shall I answer to our Saviour, saying, Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven?* his answer is, *this we may say, that whatsoever a subject is compell'd to in obedience to his sovereign, and does it not in order to his own mind, but the law of his country, the action is not his, but his sovereign's; nor is it he that in this case denies Christ before men, but his governour, and the laws of his country.*

But can any man, that in good earnest pays any degree of reverence to our blessed Saviour and his religion, think to baffle such plain words by so frivolous an answer? there is no man doubts, but if the magistrate should command men to deny Christ, he would be guilty of a great sin in so doing: But if *we must obey God rather than men*, and every man must *give an account of himself to God*; how will this excuse him that denies Christ, or breaks any other commandment of God upon the command of the magistrate? And to put the matter out of all doubt, that our Saviour forbids all that will be his disciples upon pain of damnation, to deny him, tho' the magistrate should

should command them to do so, it is very observable; S E R M. XII.  
 that in that very place where he speaks of confessing or denying him before men, he puts this very case of their being brought before kings and governours for confessing him, *Matth. 10. 17. Beware (says he) of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governours and kings for my sake for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.* But what testimony would this be against them, if Christians were bound to deny Christ at their command? But our Saviour goes on, and tells them how they ought to demean themselves, when they were brought before kings and governours, *ver. 19. But when they shall deliver you up, take ye no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that very hour what you shall speak.* But what need of any such extraordinary assistance in the case, if they had nothing to do but to deny him, when they were required by the magistrate to do it? And then (proceeding in the same discourse) he bids them, *ver. 28. Not to fear them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; that is, not to deny him, for fear of any temporal punishment or suffering the magistrate could inflict upon them; but to fear and obey him who can destroy body and soul in hell.* And upon this discourse our Saviour concludes, *ver. 32. 33. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* And now can any thing be plainer, than that our Saviour requires his disciples to make confession of him before kings and governours, and not to deny him for fear of any thing which they can do to them? But let us enquire a little farther, and see how the Apostles, who received this precept from our Saviour himself, did understand it. *Acts 4. 14.* We find *Peter and John* summoned before the *Jewish* magistrates, who *strictly commanded them not to speak*  
at



SERM. at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, But Peter and  
 XII. John answered and said unto them, whether it be right  
 in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto  
 God, judge ye. And when they still persisted in their  
 course, notwithstanding the command of the ma-  
 gistrate, and were called again before the council,  
 chap. 5. 28. and the high-priest asked them, saying,  
 did we not straitly command you, that you should not  
 teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem  
 with your doctrine: They return them again the same  
 answer, ver. 29. Then Peter and the other Apostles an-  
 swered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

And let any man now judge, whether our Saviour  
 did not oblige men to confess him even before ma-  
 gistrates, and to obey him rather than men. And  
 indeed, how can any man in reason think, that the  
 great king and governour of the world should invest  
 any man with a power to controul his authority, and  
 to oblige men to disobey and renounce him, by whom  
 kings reign, and princes decree judgment? This is a  
 thing so unreasonable, that it can hardly be imagined,  
 that any thing but down-right malice against God and  
 religion could prompt any man to advance such an  
 assertion.

I should now have proceeded to the fourth and last  
 particular, which I proposed to speak to; namely, to  
 vindicate the reasonableness of this precept of self-  
 denial and suffering for Christ, which, at first appear-  
 ance, may seem to be so very harsh and difficult.  
 But this, together with the application of this dis-  
 course, shall be reserved to another opportunity.

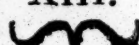
## S E R M O N XIII.

*The Second  
Sermon on  
this text.*Of Self-denial and Suffering for Christ's  
Sake.

MATTH. XVI. 24.

*Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, If any man  
will come after me, let him deny himself, and  
take up his cross, and follow me.*

**T**HEN said Jesus to his disciples, that is, upon occasion of his former discourse with them concerning his approaching passion, and that he must shortly go up to Jerusalem, and there suffer many things of the elders and chief-priests and scribes, and at last be put to death by them; then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me; that is, if any man will be my disciple, and undertake the profession of my religion, he must do it upon these terms of self-denial and suffering.

S E R M.  
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In the handling of these words, I proceeded in this method.

*First*, I considered the way which our Saviour here useth in making proselytes, and gaining men over to his religion. He offers no manner of force and violence to compell men to the profession of it; but fairly proposeth it to their consideration and choice, telling them plainly upon what terms they must be his disciples; if they like them, and be resolved to submit to them, well; if not, 'tis in vain to follow him any longer; for they cannot be his disciples. And

to

S E R M. to use any other way than this to gain men over to  
 XIII. religion, is contrary both to the nature of man, who  
 is a reasonable creature; and to the nature of religion, which, if it be not our free choice, cannot be religion.

*Secondly*, I explained this duty or precept of self-denial, express'd in these words, *let him deny himself and take up his cross*; which phrase of *taking up one's cross*, is an allusion to the *Roman* custom, which was, that the malefactor that was to be crucified, was to take up his cross upon his shoulders, and to carry it to the place of execution.

Now for our clearer understanding of this precept of self-denial, I told you, that it is not to be extended to every thing that may properly be call'd by that name, but to be limited by the plain scope and intendment of our Saviour's discourse; and therefore I did in the

*First* place remove several things which are instanced in by some, as intended and required by this precept. As,

1. That we should deny and renounce our own senses in matters of faith. But this I shewed to be absurd and impossible; because if we do not believe what we see, or will believe contrary to what we see, we destroy all certainty, there being no greater than that of sense. Besides, that the evidence of faith being less clear and certain than that of sense, it is contrary to the nature of assent, which is always sway'd and born down by the greatest and clearest evidence. So that we cannot assent to any thing in plain contradiction to the evidence of sense.

2. Others would comprehend under this precept; the denying of our reason in matters of faith; which is in the next degree of absurdity to the other; because no man can believe any thing, but upon some reason or other; and to believe without any reason, or against reason, is to make faith unreasonable, and infidelity reasonable.



3. Others pretend, that by virtue of this precept, men ought to be content to renounce their own eternal happiness, to be miserable for ever, for the glory of God, and the salvation of their brethren. But this I shewed cannot be a duty, for this plain reason ; because if it were, there is no argument left powerful enough to persuade a man to it. And as for the two scripture instances alledged to this purpose ; *Moses* his wish, of being *blotted out of the book of life* for the people of *Israel*, signifies no more than a temporal death ; and *St. Paul's* of being *accursed from Christ, for his brethren*, is only an hyperbolical expression of his great passion and zeal for the salvation of his countrymen ; as is evident from the form of the expression, such as is commonly used to usher in an hyperbole ; *I could wish*. And in the

*Second* place, I shewed positively, that the plain meaning of this precept of self-denial is this, and nothing but this ; that we should be willing to part with all our temporal interests and enjoyments, and even life itself, for the sake of Christ and his religion. This is *to deny ourselves*. And then that we should be willing to bear any temporal inconvenience and suffering upon the same account, this is *to take up our cross*. And this I shewed from the instances which our Saviour gives of self-denial, whenever he had occasion to discourse of it.

*Thirdly*, I considered the strict and indispensable obligation of this precept of self-denial, rather than to forsake Christ and his religion. Without this disposition and resolution of mind we *cannot be his disciples* ; and if we deny him before men ; he will also deny us before his Father which is in heaven. And this confession of him and his truth we are to make before kings and governors, and notwithstanding their commands to the contrary, which are of no force against the laws and commands of God.

SERM.

XIII.

Thus far I have gone. There remains only the *Fourth* and *last* particular, which I proposed to speak to; *viz.* to vindicate the reasonableness of this self-denial and suffering for Christ, which at first appearance may seem to be so very difficult. And this precept cannot be thought unreasonable, if we take into consideration these *three* things.

I. That he, who requires this of us, hath himself given us the greatest example of self-denial that ever was. The greatest in itself, in that he denied himself more, and suffered more grievous things, than it is possible for any of us to do: And such an example as, in the circumstances of it, is most apt and powerful to engage and oblige us to the imitation of it, because all his self-denial and sufferings were for our sakes.

II. If we consider, that he hath promised all needful supplies of his grace, to enable us to the discharge of this difficult duty of self-denial and suffering, and to support and comfort us therein.

III. He hath assured us of a glorious reward of all our sufferings and self-denial, beyond the proportion of them, both in the degree and duration of it. I shall go over these as briefly as I can.

I. If we consider, that he, who requires us thus to deny ourselves for him, hath given us the greatest example of self-denial, that ever was. Our Saviour knowing how unwelcome this doctrine of self-denial and suffering must needs be to his disciples, and how hardly this precept would go down with them, to sweeten it a little, and take off the harshness of it, and to prepare their minds the better for it, he tells them first of his own sufferings, that by that means he might, in some measure, reconcile their minds to it, when they saw he required nothing of them, but what he was ready to undergo himself, and to give them the example of it. And upon this occasion it was, that our Saviour acquaints them with the hard and difficult terms upon which they must be

be his disciples; *ver. 21.* the Evangelist tells us, that S E R M.  
XIII.  
*Jesus began to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, that is, immediately upon this discourse of his own sufferings, as the fittest time for it, he takes the opportunity to tell them plainly of their own sufferings, and that unless they were prepared and resolved to deny themselves so far, as to suffer all manner of persecution for his sake and the profession of his religion, they could not be his disciples. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, that is, let him reckon and resolve upon following that example of self-denial and suffering in which I will go before him. Now the consideration of this example of self-denial and suffering which our Saviour hath given us, hath great force in it to reconcile us to this difficult duty, and to shew the reasonableness of it.*

1. In that he, who requires us thus to deny ourselves, hath himself in his own person, given us the greatest example of self-denial that ever was. And,

2. Such an example as, in all the circumstances of it, is most apt and powerful to engage and oblige us to the imitation of it; because all his self-denial and sufferings were for our sakes.

1. He, who requires us thus to deny ourselves, hath himself in his own person given us the greatest example of self-denial that ever was; in that he denied himself more, and suffered more grievous things, than any of us can do. He bore the insupportable load of all the sins of mankind, and of the wrath and vengeance due to them. *Never was sorrow like to his sorrow wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men. (i. e.)* He underwent more affliction, and had more contempt poured up-

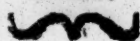


S E R M. on him, than ever was upon any of the sons of men:  
 XIII. And yet he endured all this with incredible patience  
 and meekness, with the greatest evenness and constancy of mind, and with the most perfect submission and resignation of himself to the will of God, that can be imagined.

Such an example as this should be of great force to animate us with the like courage and resolution, in lesser dangers and difficulties. To see *the Captain of our salvation* going before us, and leading us on so bravely, and *made perfect by greater sufferings* than we can ever be called to, or are any ways able to undergo, is no small argument and encouragement to us, to *take up our cross and follow him*. The consideration of the unknown sufferings of the Son of God, so great as we cannot well conceive them, should make all the afflictions and sufferings that can befall us, not only tolerable, but easy to us. Upon this consideration it is, that the Apostle animates Christians to patience in their christian course, notwithstanding all the hardships and sufferings that attended it. *Heb. 12. 2. Let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, and despised the shame. For consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye also be weary and faint in your minds.*

And this example is more powerful for our encouragement, because therein we see the world conquered to our hands, and all the terrors and temptations of it baffled and subdued, and thereby a cheap and easy victory over it obtained for us. By this consideration, our Saviour endeavours to inspire his disciples with chearfulness and courage in this great conflict, *John 16. 33. In the world ye shall have tribulation: But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

2. This example of our Saviour, is such as, in all the circumstances of it, is most apt and powerful to



engage and oblige us to the imitation of it, because all his self-denial and sufferings were for our sakes, in pity and kindness to us, and wholly for our benefit and advantage. We are apt to have their example in great regard, from whom we have received great kindness and mighty benefits. This pattern of self-denial and suffering, which our religion proposeth to us, is the example of one, whom we have reason to esteem, and love, and imitate, above any person in the world. 'Tis the example of our Lord and Master, of our Sovereign and our Saviour, of the founder of our religion, and of *the author and finisher of our faith*: And surely such an example must needs carry authority with it, and command our imitation. 'Tis the example of our best friend and greatest benefactor; of him, who laid down his life for us, and sealed his love to us with his dearest blood, and even when we were bitter enemies to him, did and suffered more for us, than any man ever did for his best friend. If we should be reduced to poverty and want, let us consider him, *who being Lord of all, had not wrore to lay his head; who being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* If it should be our lot to be persecuted for righteousness sake, and exercised with sufferings and reproaches; let us look unto *Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, and despised the shame* for our sakes. In a word, can we be discontented at any condition, or decline it in a good cause; when we consider how contented the Son of God was, in the meanest and most destitute, how meek and patient in the most afflicted and suffering condition; how he welcomed all events, and was so perfectly resigned to the will of his heavenly Father, that whatever pleased God, pleased him?

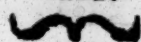
And surely in no case is example more necessary than in this, to engage and encourage us in the discharge of so difficult a duty, so contrary to the bent and inclination of flesh and blood. A bare precept

S E R M. of self-denial, and a peremptory command to sacrifice our own wills, our ease, our pleasure, our reputation, yea and life itself, to the glory of God, and the maintenance of his truth, would have founded very harsh and severe, had not the practice of all this been mollified and sweetned by a pattern of so much advantage; by one who in all these respects denied himself, much more than it is possible for us to do; by one who might have insisted upon a greater right, who abased himself, and stooped from a greater height and dignity; who was not forced into a condition of meanness and poverty, but chose it for our sakes; who submitted to suffering, tho' he had never deserved it. Here is an example that hath all the argument, and all the encouragement that can be, to the imitation of it.

Such an example is of greater force and authority than any precept or law can be; so that well might our Lord, thus going before us, command us to follow him, and say, *if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* For if he thus denied himself, well may we, who have much less to deny, but much more cause and reason to do it. He did it voluntarily, and of choice; but it is our duty. He did it for our sakes; we do it for our own. His own goodness moved him to deny himself for us; but gratitude obligeth us to deny ourselves in any thing for him. We did not in the least deserve any thing from him; but he hath wholly merited all this, and infinitely more from us. So that such an example as this is, in all the circumstances of it, cannot but be very powerful and effectual to oblige us to the imitation of it. But the reasonableness of this precept will yet farther appear if we consider in the

*Third place,* That God hath promised to all sincere Christians all needful supplies of his grace, to enable them to the discharge of this difficult duty of self-denial, and to support and comfort them therein.





therein. For the spirit of Christ dwells in Christians, and the same glorious power that raised up Jesus from the dead, works mightily in them that believe; *Eph. 1. 19. That ye may know* (saith St. Paul, speaking in general to all Christians) *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.* Of ourselves we are very weak, and the temptations and terrors of the world very powerful; but there is a principle residing in every true Christian, able to bear us up against the world, and the power of all its temptations. *Whatsoever is born of God* (saith St. John) *overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

And this grace and strength was afforded to the first Christians in a most extraordinary manner, for their comfort and support under sufferings; so that they were *strengthened with all might, according to God's glorious power, unto all long-suffering with joyfulness*, as St. Paul prays for the *Colossians*, ch. 1. 11. And these *consolations of the Spirit of God*, this joy in the Holy Ghost, was not peculiarly appropriated to the first times of christianity; but is still afforded to all sincere Christians, in such degree as is necessary, and convenient for them. And whenever God exerciseth good men with tryals more than human, and such sufferings, as are beyond the ordinary rate of human strength and patience to bear, he hath promised to endue them with more than human courage and resolution. So St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. *He is faithful, that hath promised; who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* And why should we be daunted at any suffering; if God be pleased

S E R M. pleased to encrease our strength, in proportion to the  
XIII. sharpness of our sufferings?

And blessed be God, many of our persecuted brethren at this day have remarkably found this comfortable assistance and support; though many likewise have fallen through fear and weakness, as it also happened in the primitive times. But where-ever this promise is not made good, it is (as I have formerly said) by reason of some fault and failing on our part. Either men were not sincere in the profession of the truth, and then, no wonder if *when tribulation and persecution ariseth, because of the word, they are offended and fall off*. Or else they were too confident of themselves, and did not seek God's grace and assistance, and rely upon it as they ought; and thereupon God hath left them to themselves (as he did *Peter*) to convince them of their own frailty and rash confidence; and yet even in that case, when there is truth and sincerity at the bottom, there is no reason to doubt, but that the goodness of God is such, as by some means or other to give to such persons (as he did to *Peter*) the opportunity of recovering themselves by repentance, and a more stedfast resolution afterwards.

*Fourthly*, If we consider in the *last* place, that our Saviour hath assured us of a glorious and eternal reward of all our self-denial and sufferings for him; a reward infinitely beyond the proportion of our sufferings, both in the degree and duration of it. Now the clear discovery of this is peculiarly owing to the christian religion, and the *appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel*.

And as our blessed Saviour hath assured us of this blessed state of good men in another world; so hath he likewise assured us that greater degrees of this happiness shall be the portion of those who suffer for him and his truth, *Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the*

the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my names sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven. SERM.  
XIII.

And nothing surely can be more reasonable, than to part with things of small value, for things of infinitely greater and more considerable; to forego the transient pleasures and enjoyments, and the imperfect felicities of this world, for the solid and perfect and perpetual happiness of a better life; and to exchange a short and miserable life, for eternal life and blessedness; in a word, to be content to be driven home, to be banisht out of this world into our own native country, and to be violently thrust out of this vale of tears, into those regions of blis, where are joys unspeakable and full of glory.

This consideration St. Paul tells us supported the primitive Christians under their sharpest and heaviest sufferings, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *For this cause* (says he) *we faint not, because our light-affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* So that our sufferings bear no more proportion to the reward of them, than finite does to infinite, than temporal to eternal, between which there is no proportion.

All that now remains, is to draw some useful inferences from what hath been discoursed, concerning this great and difficult duty of self-denial for the sake of Christ and his religion; and they shall be these following.

I. To acknowledge the great goodness of God to us, that all these laws and commands, even the hardest and severest of them, are so reasonable.

God, as he is our maker and gave us our beings, hath an entire and sovereign right over us, and by virtue of that right might have imposed very hard things



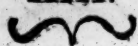
SER M. things upon us, and this without the giving account  
 XIII. to us of any of his matters, and without propound-  
 ing any reward to us, so vastly disproportionable to  
 our obedience to him. But in giving laws to us, he  
 hath not made use of this right. The most severe  
 and rigorous commands of the Gospel are such, that  
 we shall be infinitely gainers by our obedience to  
 them. If we deny our selves any thing in this world  
 for Christ and his religion, we shall, in the next,  
 be considered for it to the utmost, not only far be-  
 yond what it can deserve, but beyond what we can  
 conceive or imagine; for this perishing life, and the  
 transitory trifles and enjoyments of it, we shall receive  
*a kingdom which cannot be shaken, an incorruptible  
 crown which fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.*  
 For these are faithful sayings, and we shall find them  
 to be true, *if that we suffer with Christ we shall also  
 reign with him; if we be persecuted for righteousness  
 sake, great shall our reward be in heaven; if we part  
 with our temporal life, we shall be made partakers  
 of eternal life.* He that is firmly persuaded of the  
 happiness of the next world, and believes *the glory  
 which shall then be revealed,* hath no reason to be so  
 much offended at the sufferings of this present time,  
 so long as he knows and believes, *that these light af-  
 flictions which are but for a moment, will work for  
 him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

II. Seeing this is required of every Christian, to  
 be always in a preparation and disposition of mind to  
 deny our selves, and to take up our cross; if we do  
 in good earnest resolve to be Christians, we ought to  
 sit down and consider well with our selves, what our  
 religion will cost us, and whether we be content to  
 come up to the price of it. If we value any thing  
 in this world above Christ and his truth, *we are not  
 worthy of him.* If it come to this, that we must ei-  
 ther renounce him and his religion, or quit our tem-  
 poral interests, if we be not ready to forego these, nay,  
 and to part with even life itself rather than to forsake  
 him

him and his truth; *we are not worthy of him.* These S E R M.  
XIII. are the terms of our christianity, and therefore we are required in baptism solemnly to renounce the world: And our Saviour, from this very consideration, infers, that all who take upon them the profession of his religion should consider seriously before-hand, and count the cost of it. *Luke 14. 28. Which of you (says he) intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Or what king going to war with another king, doth not sit down and consult, whether with ten thousand he be able to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand. So likewise, whosoever he be, that forsaketh not all he hath, cannot be my disciple.* You see the terms upon which we are Christians; we must always be prepared in the resolution of our minds to deny our selves, and take up our cross, tho' we are not actually put upon this trial.

III. What hath been said is matter of great comfort and encouragement to all those who deny themselves, and suffer upon so good an account: Of whom, God knows, there are too great a number at this day, in several parts of the world; some under actual sufferings, such as cannot but move compassion and horror in all that hear of them; others who are fled hither, and into other countries, for refuge and shelter from one of the sharpest persecutions that perhaps ever was, if all the circumstances of it be duly considered. But not to enlarge upon so unpleasant a theme, they who suffer for the truth and righteousness sake, have all the comfort and encouragement, that the best example, and the greatest and most glorious promises of God can give. They have the best example in their view; *Jesus the author and finisher of their faith, who endured the cross, and despised the shame.* So that how great and terrible soever their sufferings be, they do but tread in the steps of the Son of God, and of the best and holiest man that ever was; and he, who is their example in suffering,

SER. M. suffering, will likewise be their support, and *their*  
 XIII. *exceeding great reward.*



So that tho' suffering for Christ be accounted great self-denial, and he is graciously pleased so to accept it, because in denying things present and sensible, for things future and invisible, we do not only declare our affection to him, but our great faith and confidence in him, by shewing that we rely upon his word, and venture all upon the security which he offers us in another world; yet according to a right estimate of things, and to those who *walk by faith and not by sight*, this which we call self-denial, is, in truth and reality, but a more commendable sort of self-love; because we do herein most effectually consult, and secure, and advance our own happiness.

IV. And *lastly*, Since God hath been pleased for so long a time to excuse us from this hardest part of self-denial, let us not grudge to deny our selves in lesser matters, for the sake of his truth and religion; to miss a good place, or to quit it upon that account; much less let us think much to renounce our vices, and to thwart our evil inclinations for his sake. As *Naaman's* servant said to him concerning the means prescribed by the prophet for his cure, *If he had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much more, when he hath only said, Wash and be clean?* So since God imposeth no harder terms upon us, than repentance and reformation of our lives, we should readily and thankfully submit to them.

This, I know, is difficult to some, *to mortifie their earthly members; to crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts of it; 'tis like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye.* Some are so strongly addicted to their lusts and vices, that they could with more ease despise life in many cases, than thus deny themselves. But in truth, there is no more of self-denial in it, than a man denies himself when he is mortally sick and wounded, in being content to be cured, and willing to be well. This is not at all  
 to



to our temporal prejudice and inconvenience, and it directly conduceth to our eternal happiness; for there is no man that lives a holy and virtuous life, and in obedience to the laws of God, that can lightly receive any prejudice by it in this world. Since God doth not call us to suffer, we should do so much the more for him. Since he doth not put us to testify our love to him by laying down our lives for him, we should shew it by a greater care to keep his commandments.

S E R M.  
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God was pleased to exercise the first Christians with great sufferings, and to try their love and constancy to him and his truth, in a very extraordinary manner, by severity and contempt, by *the spoiling of their goods, and the loss of all things; by bonds and imprisonments; by cruel mockings and scourgings; by the extremity of torments, and by resisting even unto blood; by being kill'd for his sake all the day long, and appointed as sheep for the slaughter.* God was pleased to make their way to heaven very sharp and painful, and to *hedge it in as it were with thorns on every side,* so that they could not, but *through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Thus we ought all to be in a readiness and resolution to submit to this duty, if God should think fit at any time of our lives to call us to it. But if he be pleased to excuse us from it, and *to let this cup pass from us,* (which may lawfully be our earnest prayer to God, since we have so good a pattern for it) there will be another duty incumbent upon us, which will take up the whole man, and the whole time of our life, and that is *to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.*



*Preached  
at White-  
Hall before  
the family,  
Nov. 1.  
1686.*

## S E R M O N XIV.

Good Men Strangers and Sojourners  
upon Earth.

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*The first  
Sermon on  
this Text.*

★ H E B. xi. 13.

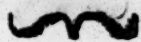
*And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

The whole verse runs thus ;

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

S E R M.  
XIV.

**T**HE Apostle having declared at the latter end of the foregoing chapter, that faith is the great principle whereby good men are acted, and whereby they are supported under all the evils and sufferings of this life, verse 38. *now the just shall live by faith* ; in this chapter he makes it his main business, to set forth to us at large the force and power of faith ; and to this purpose, he first tells us what kind of faith he means, *viz.* a firm persuasion of things not present and visible to sense, but invisible and future ; ver. 1. *Now faith* (faith he) *is the confident expectation of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Faith represents to us the reality of things which are invisible to sense, as the existence of  
God



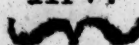
God and his providence; and of things which are at great distance from us, as the future state of rewards and punishments in another world.

And then he proceeds to shew, by particular and famous instances, that the firm belief and persuasion of these things, was the great principle of the piety and virtue of the saints, and of good men in all ages of the world; by this *Abel*, and *Enoch*, and *Noah*; *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*; *Joseph* and *Moses*, and all the famous heroes of the Old Testament, obtained a good report and pleased God, and did all those eminent acts of obedience and self-denial which are recorded of them. They believed the being of God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. They dreaded his threatnings, and relied upon his promises of future and invisible good things. They lived and died in a full persuasion and confidence of the truth of them; tho' they did not live to see them actually fulfilled and accomplished. All these (saith he, speaking of those eminent saints which he had instanced in before) died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them. This is spoken with a more particular regard to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, to whom the promises of the conquest and possession of a fruitful land, were made, and of a numerous offspring, among whom should be the *Messias*, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

These promises they did not live to see accomplished and made good in their days; but they heartily believed them, and rejoiced in the hope and expectation of them, as if they had embraced them in their arms, and been put into the actual possession of them: And they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

This saying and acknowledgment more particularly and immediately refers to those sayings of the patriarchs *Abraham* and *Jacob*, which we find recorded,  
Gen.



SERM. *Gen. 23. 4. where Abraham says to the sons of Heth.*  
 XIV. *I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: And*  
 *Gen. 47. 9. where Jacob says to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been. These good men were strangers and sojourners in a land which was promised to be theirs afterwards. They dwelt in it themselves as strangers, but were in expectation that it would one day become the inheritance of their posterity.*

Now in this, as by a type and shadow, the Apostle represents to us the condition of good men, while they are passing through this world. They are *pilgrims and strangers in the earth*; they travel up and down the world for a time, as the patriarchs did in the land of *Canaan*; but are in expectation of a better and more settled condition hereafter; *they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*, says the Apostle at the 16th verse of this chapter.

That which I design from these words, is to represent to us our present condition in this world, and to awaken us to a due sense and serious consideration of it. It is the same condition that all the saints and holy men that are gone before us were in, in this world; and every one of us may say with *David*, *Psal. 39. 12. I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my Fathers were.* It is a condition very troublesome and very unsettled, such as that of *pilgrims and strangers* useth to be. This we must all acknowledge, if we judge rightly of our present state and condition. *They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*; but yet it was not without the hope and expectation of a better and happier condition in reversion. So it follows just after; *they that say such things*, (that is, *that confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth*) declare plainly, *that they seek a country.*

This bore up the patriarchs under all the evils and troubles of their pilgrimage, that they expected an inheritance, and a quiet and settled possession of that good land which God had promised to them. Answerably to which, good men do expect, after the few and evil days of their pilgrimage in this world are over, a blessed inheritance in a better country, that is an heavenly; and with blessed Abraham, the father of the faithful, they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, as it is said of that good patriarch at the tenth verse of this chapter.

It is very frequent not only in scripture, but in other authors, to represent our condition in this world, by that of pilgrims and sojourners in a foreign country: For the mind, which is the man, and our immortal souls, which are by far the most noble and excellent part of our selves, are the natives of heaven, and but pilgrims and strangers here in the earth; and when the days of our pilgrimage shall be over, are designed to return to that heavenly country from which they came, and to which they belong. And therefore the Apostle tells us, *Phil. 3. 20.* that Christians have relation to heaven, as their native place and country, ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, *our conversation is in heaven*, so we render the words; but they properly signify, that Christians are members of that city and society which is above; and tho' they converse at present here below, while they are passing through this world, yet heaven is the country to which they do belong, and whither they are continually tending, *sedes ubi fata quietas ostendunt*, where a quiet habitation, and a perpetual rest, is designed and prepared for them. This acknowledgment David makes concerning himself, and all the people of God, *1 Chron. 29. 15.* *For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.* So likewise St. Peter, *1 Pet. 1. 17.* *Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; and*

SERM. chap. 2. ver. 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as  
XIV. *strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.*

And not only the inspired writers of holy scripture, but heathen authors, do frequently make use of this allusion, *Plato* tells us, it was a common saying, and almost in every man's mouth, *ωραμηδονία τις ἐστὶν ὁ βίος*, the life of a man is a kind of pilgrimage. And *Tully*, in his excellent discourse *de senectute*, (concerning old age) brings in *Cato* describing our passage out of this world, not as a departure from our home, but like a man leaving his inn, in which he hath lodged for a night or two, *ex vita ista discedo tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi dedit*: "When I leave this world (says he) I look upon himself as departing out of an inn, and not as quitting mine own home and habitation; nature having assigned this world to us as a place to sojourn, but not to dwell in." Which is the same with what the Apostle says in the text, concerning the patriarchs, *they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth*; and concerning all christians, chap. 13. 14. *Here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come.*

But I do not intend to follow the metaphor too close, and to vex and torture it, by pursuing all those little parrallels and similitudes, which a lively fancy might make or find, betwixt the condition of strangers and pilgrims, and the life of man during his abode and passage through this world. I will insist only upon two things, which seem plainly to be designed and intended by this metaphor, and they are these;

I. That our condition in this world is very troublesome and unsettled; *they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

II. It implies a tendency to a future settling, and the hopes and expectation of a happier condition, into which we shall enter when we go out of this world. For so it follows in the very next words after the text; *they confessed that they were as strangers and pilgrims on*  
the



the earth: For they that say such things declare plainly S E R M.  
that they seek a country. They that say such things; XIV.  
that is, they that acknowledge themselves to have  
lived in such a restless and uncertain condition in this  
world, travelling from one place to another, as the  
patriarchs *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* did, and yet  
pretend to be persuaded of the goodness of God, and  
the faithfulness of his promise, in which he solemnly  
declared himself to be their God, do hereby plainly  
shew, that they expect some happier condition here-  
after, wherein that great promise of God will be  
made good to them to the full.

And these are two very weighty and useful consider-  
ations, that we should both understand our present  
condition in this world, and our future hope and ex-  
pectation after our departure out of it, that so we  
may demean our selves suitably to both these condi-  
tions; both as it is fit for those who look upon them-  
selves as *pilgrims and sojourners* in this world, and like-  
wise as it becomes those who *seek and expect a better*  
*country*, and hope to be made partakers of a blessed  
immortality in another world. I shall briefly speak  
to both these; and then shew, what effect and influ-  
ence the serious meditation of these *two* points ought  
to have upon every one of us.

I. That our condition in this world is very trouble-  
some and unsettled. This I take to be principally  
intended in the metaphor of *strangers and pilgrims*.  
Such was the life of the patriarchs, which is here  
spoken of in the text; they had no constant abode  
and fixed habitation, but were continually wandering  
from one kingdom and country to another; in which  
travels they were exposed to a great many hazards and  
dangers, afflictions and miseries, affronts and injuries,  
as we read at large in the history of their travels in  
the Old Testament. And such is our condition in  
this world; it is often troublesome, and always un-  
certain and unsettled.

S E R M. 'Tis often very troublesome : Not to insist upon the  
 XIV. weak condition of infancy and childhood, the help-  
 lessness of that state, and insufficiency of it for its own  
 preservation, and the supply of its natural wants and  
 necessities : Not to mention the dangerous vanity and  
 desperate folly of youth, nor the infirmities and con-  
 tempts, the many tedious and wearisome days and  
 nights that old age is commonly grieved and afflicted  
 withal, to that degree, as to make life not only un-  
 pleasant, but almost an intolerable burthen to us.  
 Not to dwell upon these, which yet take up and pos-  
 sess a great share and portion of our lives : If we look  
 upon man in his best state, we shall find him, as  
*David* hath long since pronounced on him, to be *al-*  
*together vanity*. We need not go a pilgrimage, and  
 travel into remote countries, to make life more trouble-  
 some and uneasy. In what part of the world soever  
 we are, even that which we improperly call our own  
 home and native country, we shall meet with trouble  
 and inconvenience enough to convince us, that we  
 are but *strangers* in it. More especially good men  
 are peculiarly liable to a great many evils and sufferings,  
 upon account of their piety and virtue. *They are not*  
*of the world* (as our blessed Saviour tells his disciples,  
*John 15. 19.*) and *because they are not of the world,*  
*therefore the world hateth them,* and taketh all oppor-  
 tunities and occasions to vex and persecute them in one  
 kind or other, either by doing all manner of evil to  
 them, or by speaking all manner of evil of them.

But suppose we escape trouble upon this account,  
 there are abundance of common and natural incon-  
 veniences, which render human life very uneasy. For  
 either we must live alone, or in the company and  
 society of others : One of these two is necessary and  
 unavoidable. Suppose we would live alone ; how  
 few are there that can enjoy themselves tolerably alone  
 for any considerable time ? For though there be a  
 great deal too much of self-love in mankind, and  
 men are generally extremely fond of themselves ; yet

I know

I know not how it happens (though so it is) that very few men in the world care for their own company, or can endure, for any considerable time, to converse only with themselves; nay, for the most part, they are sooner glutted with themselves, and surfeited of their own conversation, than with the worst company they can meet with; a shrewd sign, as one would think, that they knew something worse by themselves than of any body else, or at least they know it more certainly. It is a wise and deep saying of *Aristotle*, *whoever affects to be alone, must be either a god or a wild beast*; either he must be sufficient for himself, and want nothing; or of so wild and savage a disposition, as to destroy every thing that is weaker, and to run away from every thing that is stronger than himself. Now man is neither good enough to be contented and satisfied with himself, nor bad enough to hate and avoid every body else; and therefore he must enter into society, and keep company with other men.

And if we go abroad into the world, and try the conversation of men, it cannot but grieve us to see a great many things, which yet we must see every day; the censoriousness, and uncharitableness, and insincerity of men one towards another; to see with what kindness they will treat one another to the face, and how hardly they will use them behind their backs. If they were nothing else, this one naughty quality, so common and reigning among mankind, were enough to make an honest and true hearted man, one that loves plainness and sincerity, to be heartily sick of the world, and glad to steal of the stage, where there is nothing native and sincere, but all personated and acted; where the conversation of a great part of men is all designing and insidious, full of flattery and falsehood, of good words and ill offices: *One speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth; but in his heart he lieth in wait*, as it is in the prophet, *Jer. 9. 8.* And when a man hath



S E R M. done all the good turns he can, and endeavoured to  
 XIV. oblige every man, and not only to live inoffensively,  
 but exemplarily; he is fairly dealt withal, and comes  
 off upon good terms, if he can but escape the ill  
 words of men for doing well, and obtain a pardon  
 for those things which truly deserve praise.

But setting aside these, and the like melancholy  
 considerations; when we are in the health and vigour  
 of our age, when our blood is warm, and our spirits  
 quick, and the humours of our body not yet turned  
 and sowered by great disappointments, and grievous  
 losses of our estates, or nearest friends and relations,  
 by a long course of afflictions, by many cross events  
 and calamitous accidents; yet we are continually liable  
 to all these; and the perpetual fear and danger of  
 them is no small trouble and uneasiness to our minds,  
 and does in a great measure rob us of the comfort,  
 and eat out the pleasure and sweetness of all our en-  
 joyments; and, by degrees, the evils we fear over-  
 take us; and as one affliction and trouble goes off,  
 another succeeds in the place of it, like *Job's* messen-  
 gers, whose bad tidings and reports of calamitous  
 accidents came so thick upon him, that they overtook  
 one another.

If we have a plentiful fortune, we are apt to a-  
 buse it to intemperance and luxury; and this naturally  
 breeds bodily pains and diseases, which take away all  
 the comfort and enjoyment of a great estate. If we  
 have health, it may be we are afflicted with losses or  
 deprived of friends, or crossed in our interests and  
 designs, and one thing or other happens to impede or  
 interrupt the contentment and happiness of our lives.  
 Sometimes an unexpected storm, or some other sud-  
 den calamity, sweepeth away, in an instant, all that  
 which with so much industry and care we have been  
 gathering many years. Or if an estate stand firm,  
 our children are taken away, to whose comfort and  
 advantage all the pains and endeavours of our lives  
 were devoted. Or if none of these happen (as it is  
 very

very rare to escape most, or some of them) yet for S E R M.  
 a demonstration to us that God intended this world XIV.  
 to be uneasy, to convince us that a perfect state of  
 happiness is not to be had here below, we often see  
 in experience that those who seem to be in a condi-  
 tion as happy as this world can put them into, by  
 the greatest accommodations towards it, are yet as  
 far or farther from happiness, as those who are desti-  
 tute of most of those things wherein the greatest fe-  
 licity of this world is thought to consist. Many  
 times it so happens, that they who have all the fur-  
 niture and requisites, all the materials and ingredi-  
 ents of a worldly felicity at their command, and in  
 their power, yet have not the skill and ability out  
 of all these to frame a happy condition of life to  
 themselves. They have health, and friends, and re-  
 putation, and estate in abundance, and all outward  
 accommodations that heart can wish; and yet in the  
 midst of all these circumstances of outward felicity,  
 they are uneasy in their minds, and as the wise man  
 expresseth it, *in their sufficiency they are in straits*,  
 and are as it were surfeited even with happiness itself,  
 and do so fantastically and unaccountably nauseate the  
 good condition they are in, that tho' they want no-  
 thing to make them happy, yet they cannot think  
 themselves so; though they have nothing in the  
 world to molest and disgust them, yet they can make  
 a shift to create as much trouble to themselves, out  
 of nothing, as they who have the real and substantial  
 causes of discontent.

Which plainly shews, that we are not to look for  
 happiness here; 'tis not to be found in this land of  
 the living; and after our enquiries after it, we shall  
 see sufficient reason to take up *Solomon's* conclusion,  
 that *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*; which is much  
 the same with that aphorism of *David* his father,  
 which I mentioned before, that *man in his best estate*  
*is altogether vanity.*

S E R M. But what happiness soever our condition in this  
 XIV. world is capable of, 'tis most assuredly full of uncertainty and unsettlement; we cannot enjoy it long, and every moment we are in danger of being deprived of it. Whatever degree of earthly felicity we are possessed of, we have no security that it shall continue. There is nothing in this world, but when we are as sure of it as this world can make us, may be taken away from us by a thousand accidents. But suppose it to abide and continue; we our ourselves shall be taken away from it: We must die, *in that very day* all our enjoyments and hopes, as to this world, will *perish* with us; for here is no abiding place, *we have no continuing city*; so that it is in vain to design a happiness to ourselves in this world, when we are not to stay in it, but only travel and pass through it.

And this is the *first*; our condition in this world is very troublesome and unsettled.

II. Our condition in this world being a state of pilgrimage, doth imply a tendency to future settlement, and the hopes and expectation of a happier condition hereafter. And so the apostle reasons immediately after the text; *they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth; for they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country*; that is, they who acknowledge themselves to be *pilgrims and strangers on the earth*, and yet withal profess to be persuaded of the goodness of God and the fidelity of his promise, *do plainly declare that they seek another country*. This is spoken of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, who acknowledged themselves to be *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, and thereby declared that they sought another country. Now, says the apostle, this cannot be the country from whence they first came, *Ur of the Chaldees*, ver. 15. *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had an opportunity of returning thither*. And therefore he concludes, that the country which they sought was a better



ter country than any in this world, ver. 16. *But now they desire a better country; that is, an heavenly. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.* This plainly refers to that famous declaration or promise of God to the patriarchs of being their God; *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* Now certainly this promise of God did signifie some very great blessing and advantage to those faithful servants of God above others. This was not made good to them in this world; for *they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth.* Where then is the blessing spoken of and signified by the great words of that promise that *God was their God?* They met with no such condition in this world, as was answerable to the greatness of the promise. From hence the apostle argues, that they had a firm persuasion of a future happiness; *For they that say such things declare plainly, that they seek a better country; that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, since he hath prepared for them a city.* And tho' the promise of God to *Abraham* did immediately design the land of *Canaan*, and the earthly *Jerusalem*; yet the apostle extends it to that which was typified by it; viz. *an heavenly country, the Jerusalem which is above*, which at the 10th verse of this chapter, is called *a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* And now, seeing God hath designed and prepared so great a happiness for them in another world, well might he be called *their God*, notwithstanding that they were *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*; that is, tho' the full meaning and importance of this promise was not made good to them in this world, yet it was accomplished to the full in the happiness which was designed for them in another life. *And God need not be ashamed to be called their God*; implying, that if nothing had been meant by it beyond this world, this promise, of God's being *their God*, would have fallen

S E R M. fallen shamefully short of what it seemed to import.

XIV. And this I conceive to be the true reason why our Saviour lays so much weight upon this promise, as to pitch upon it for the proof of the resurrection; that is, of a future state of happiness in another world.

There are many considerations apt to persuade good men of another life after this; as, that mankind is generally possessed with this hope and persuasion; and that the more wise and virtuous men have been, the more plainly have they apprehended the hopes of immortality, and the better have they been contented to leave this world, as if, seeing farther than other men, they had a clearer prospect of the happiness they were entering upon: But above all, that God hath made our condition in this world so troublesome and unsettled, as if he had designed on purpose to make us seek for happiness elsewhere, and to elevate and raise our minds to the hopes and expectation of a condition better and more durable, than any that is to be met with in this world; which, considering the goodness of God, and his gracious providence and care of good men, is a thing of itself extremely credible.

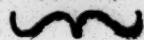
Having thus, as briefly as I could, dispatched the *two* particulars which I propounded to speak to for the explication of the text, I should now shew what influence these considerations ought to have upon our lives and practice.

And if this be our condition in this world, and these our hopes and expectations, as to another life; if we be *pilgrims and strangers on the earth*; and *look for a better country, that is, an heavenly*; this ought to have a great influence upon us in these following respects, which I shall at present but very briefly mention.

1. Let us intangle and incumber ourselves as little as we can in this our pilgrimage; let us not engage our affections too far in the pleasures and advantages of this world; for we are not to continue and settle in it, but to pass through it. A little will serve for our  
passage

passage and accommodation in this journey ; and beyond that, why should we so earnestly covet and seek more ?

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2. If we be *pilgrims and strangers* ; then it concerns us to behave ourselves blamelessly and inoffensively, remembring, that the eyes of people are upon us, and that those among whom we live will be very curious and observant of our manners and carriage.

3. Let us be chearful and patient under the troubles and afflictions of this present life. They who are in a strange country, must expect to encounter many injuries and affronts, and to be put to great difficulties and hazards, which we should endeavour to bear with that chearfulness, as men that are upon a journey use to bear foul ways and bad weather, and inconvenient lodging and accommodations.

4. The consideration of our present condition and future hopes should set us above the fondness of life, and the slavish fear of death. For our minds will never be raised to their true pitch and height, till we have in some good measure conquered these two passions, and made them subject to our reason. As for this present life, and the enjoyments of it, what do we see in them, that should make us so strangely to dote upon them ? *Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido ?* This world, at the best, is but a very indifferent place ; and he is the wisest man that bears himself towards it with the most indifferent affection ; that is always willing to leave it, and yet patient to stay in it as long as God pleases.

5. We should always prefer our duty and a good conscience before all the world ; because it is in truth more valuable, if our souls be immortal, and do survive in another world. For (as our Saviour argues) *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* And thus St. Paul reasoned with himself from the belief of a resurrection of the just and unjust.

For



S E R M. *For this cause (saith he) I exercise myself alway to have*  
 XIV. *a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward*  
 ~~~~~ *man.*

Lastly, If we be sojourners and travellers, we should often think of our end, and carefully mind the way to it. Our end is everlasting happiness; and the way to it is a constant and sincere and universal obedience to the commandments of God. When the young man in the Gospel enquired of our Saviour the way to eternal happiness, saying, Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? His answer to him was, if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. We may easily mistake our way; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Therefore we should often pray to God, as David does, Psalm. 119. 19. I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me. And Psalm 139. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

S E R M O N XV.

The second
Sermon on
this text.

Good Men Strangers and Sojourners upon Earth.

H E B. XI. 13.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The whole verse runs thus ;

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

I Have lately in this place (upon a particular day and occasion) begun to handle these words ; I shall briefly give you the heads of what hath been already delivered, and proceed to what remains. And that which I designed from this text was, to represent our present condition in this world ; and to awaken our minds to a due sense and consideration of it. It is the same condition that all the saints and holy men that have gone before us were in, in this world ; and we may all of us say with *David, Psal. 39. 12. I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*

It is very frequent not only in scripture, but in other authors, to represent our condition in this world,

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S E R M. world, by that of *pilgrims and sojourners* in a far country. For the mind, which is the man, and our immortal souls, which are by far the most noble and excellent part of our selves, are the natives of heaven, and but *pilgrims and strangers* here on the earth; and and when the days of our pilgrimage shall be accomplished, are designed to return to that *heavenly country* from which they came, and to which they belong. And for the explication of this metaphor, I insisted only upon two things, which seem plainly to be designed and intended by it.

I. That our condition in this world is very troublesome and unsettled; *They confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth.*

II. implies a tendency to a future settlement, and the hopes and expectation of a happier condition, into which we shall enter when we go out of this world.

And these I told you are two very weighty and useful considerations; that we should both understand our present condition in this world, and our future hopes and expectation after our departure out of it; that so we may demean our selves suitably to both these conditions; both as is fit for those who look on themselves as *pilgrims and sojourners* in this world; and likewise as it becomes those who *seek and expect a better country*, and hope to be partakers of a blessed immortality in another world.

I. That our condition in this world is very troublesome and unsettled; and this is principally intended by the metaphor of *pilgrims and strangers*. Such was the life of the patriarchs here spoken of in the text; they had no constant abode and fix'd habitation, but were continually wandering from one kingdom and country to another; in which travels they were exposed to a great many dangers and sufferings, affronts and injuries; as we read at large in the history of their travels in the Old Testament. And such is our condition in this world; it is often troublesome,
and

and always uncertain, and unsettled; so that what-
 ever degree of worldly felicity any man is posselt of, he hath no security that it shall continue for one mo-
 ment. S E R M.
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II. Our condition in this world being a state of pilgrimage, it implies a tendency to a future settlement, and the hopes and expectation of a happier condition, into which we shall enter so soon as we leave this world. For so it follows immediately after the text; *They confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth; For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. They that say such things; that is, they that acknowledge themselves to have lived in such a restless and uncertain condition in this world, travelling from one place to another, as the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did; and yet pretend to be persuaded of the goodness of God, and the faithfulness of his promise, in which he so solemnly declares himself to be their God; do hereby plainly shew, that they expect some happier condition hereafter, wherein that great promise of God will be made good to them to the full; so that he need not be ashamed to have been called their God.*

Having handled at large these *two* particulars, I come now to shew what influence the consideration of them ought to have upon our lives and practices. And if this be our condition in this world, and these our hopes and expectations as to another life; if we be *pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and look for a better country, that is, an heavenly*; this ought to have a great influence upon us in these following respects, which I did but briefly mention before, but shall now prosecute and press more largely.

I. Let us entangle and incumber our selves as little as we can in this our pilgrimage: Let us not engage our affections too far in the pleasures and advantages of this world, because we are not to stay in it, but to pass

S E R M. pass through it. Upon this consideration, the Apostle
 XV. St. Peter doth so earnestly exhort Christians to pre-
 serve themselves from fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. 2. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.* The gratifying of our inordinate lusts, and our carnal and sensual inclinations, is directly opposite both to the nature of our immortal spirits, and to their great design and business in this world. Fleshly lusts do not only pollute and defile, but even quench and extinguish our diviner part, and do work the ruin and destruction of it; they sink our affections into the mud and filth of this world, and do entangle and detain them there; in a word, they do wholly indispose and unfit us for that pure, and spiritual, and divine life, which alone can qualify us for our heavenly country and inheritance. And therefore while our souls are sojourning in this world, we should abstain from them, and preserve our selves unspotted and untainted by them, as being altogether unuseful, and perfectly contrary to the laws and manners of our heavenly country. If we wallow in brutish and filthy lusts, as we pass through this world; our native country, when our souls think to return to it, will reject us and cast us out: When we come to heaven's gate, and knock there, expecting to be admitted, and shall cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; He will bid us *to depart from him, because we have been workers of iniquity.* Nothing that is unclean can enter into heaven. He who is to receive us into those blessed mansions, hath declared it to be his immutable resolution and decree, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* And therefore as ever we hope to see God in that happy and blissful state, we must *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God*; that having rendered our selves as like him as we can in this world, we may be capable of the blessed sight and enjoyment of him in the other.

And

And as for the advantages in this world, let us not S E R M.
XV. pursue them too eagerly, we may take the conveniences which fairly offer themselves to us, and be content to want what we cannot honestly have, and without going out of the way of our duty, considering that we are travellers, and that a little will serve for our passage and accommodation in our pilgrimage. And beyond that why should we so earnestly covet more, and trouble ourselves for that which is not necessary to our journey, why should we at any time deal unjustly to attain any of this world's goods? They will stand us in stead for so little a while, that we can have no temptation to injure or oppress any man, to break the peace of our consciences, and to wound our souls for the attaining of them. If the providence of God offer them to us, and bring them to our hands, in the use of honest diligence and lawful means; as we are not to refuse them, so neither are we to set our hearts upon them, not to suffer our affections to be entangled in them.

The wisest use we can make of them, will be, to do like those who traffick in foreign parts, to consign our estates into our own native country, to send our treasures before us into the other world, that we may have the benefit of them when we come there. And this we may do by alms and charity. Whatever we spend upon the flesh, we leave behind us, and it will turn to no account to us in our own country: But whatever we lay out for the relief of the poor, is so much treasure laid out and secured to our selves against another day. So our blessed Saviour assures us, *Luke 12. 33. That giving of alms is providing for our selves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.*

II. If we be *pilgrims* and *strangers*, then it concerns us to behave our selves with great caution, and to live blamelessly and inoffensively; remembering that the eyes of people are upon us, and that those among whom we sojourn, will be very prying and

SERM. curious, and narrow observers of our manners and carriage. They that are in a strange country, are not wont to take that liberty and freedom which the natives of the place may do, but to keep a perpetual guard upon themselves, knowing how strictly they are observed, and that they live among those who bear no good-will to them, and that every bad thing we do, reflects upon our nation, and is a reproach to the country to which we belong. *Ye are not of the world* (says our Lord) *if ye were of the world, the world would love its own: But ye are not of the world; therefore the world hateth you.* Upon this account the Apostle chargeth christians to be *harmless and blameless*, and *as it becomes the Sons of God to be, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we should shine as lights.* The same argument St. Peter useth, *1 Pet. 2. 11, 12. I beseech you, as pilgrims and strangers, to abstain from fleshly lusts, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that is, considering that you are among strangers and enemies, and therefore ought to be very careful to bring no scandal upon your holy profession, among those who will be ready to take all advantages against you. Particularly, we, who pretend to the same heavenly country, must be kind to one another, and whilst we live among strangers, have no quarrels amongst ourselves. In a strange country, it useth to be a mighty endearment of men to one another, that they are of the same country and fellow-citizens, and this alone is commonly sufficient to unite their affections, and link their interests together. But how little of this is to be seen among Christians! How shamefully do they quarrel among themselves, in the midst of enemies and strangers! as if they had no relation to one another, and never expected to meet at last in the same country, and there to live together for ever.*

III. Let us be as patient and chearful as we can, under all the troubles and afflictions which we meet with in this life. They who are in strange countries, must

must expect to encounter many injuries and affronts, and to be put to great difficulties and hardships. Those which are lighter and more tolerable, we must bear with chearfulness. Upon a journey men use to put on all the pleasantness they can, and to make sport of all the inconveniences of the ways and weather, and little cross accidents that befall them: And thus, if we had but the art and wisdom to do it, many of the lesser inconveniences of human life might well enough be played off, and made matter rather of mirth and diversion, than of melancholy and serious trouble.

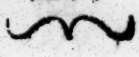
But there are some evils and calamities of human life, that are too heavy and serious to be jested withal, and require the greatest consideration, and a very great degree of patience to support us under them, and enable us to bear them decently; as the loss of friends and dearest relations; as the loss of an only son, grown up to be well fixed and settled in a virtuous course, and promising all the comfort to his parents that they themselves can wish: These certainly are some of the greatest evils of this world, and hardest to be born. For men may pretend what they will to philosophy, and contempt of the world, and of the perishing comforts and enjoyments of it; to the extirpation of their passions, and an insensibility of these things, which the weaker and undisciplined part of mankind keep such a wailing and lamentation about: But when all is done, nature hath framed us as we are, and hath planted in our nature strong inclinations and affections to our friends and relations; and these affections are as naturally moved upon such occasions, and pluck every string of our hearts as violently, as extreme hunger and thirst do gnaw upon our stomachs.

And therefore it is foolish for any man to pretend to love things mightily, and to rejoice greatly in the enjoyment of them; and yet to be so easily contented to lose them, and to be parted from them. This is

S E R M. to separate things which nature hath strongly linked together. Whatever we mightily love, does thereby, in some sort, become part of our selves, and it cannot hang loose to us, to be separated and divorced from us without trouble; no more than a limb, that is vitally and by strong ligaments united to the body, can be dropt off when we please, or rent from the body without pain. And whoever pretends to have a mighty affection for any thing, and yet at the same time does pretend that he can contentedly, and without any great sense or signification of pain, bear the loss of it, does not talk like a philosopher, but like an hypocrite; and under a grave pretence of being wise, is in truth an ill-natur'd man. For most certainly, in proportion to our love of any thing, will be our trouble and grief for the loss of it.

So that under these great and heavier strokes, we had need both of faith and patience. And indeed, nothing but the firm belief of *a better country, that is, an heavenly*, of another life after this, and a blessed immortality in another world, is sufficient to support a man in the *few and evil days of his pilgrimage*, and to sustain his spirit under the great evils and calamities of this life. But this fully answers all, *that the afflictions and sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Nay, that if we bear these afflictions patiently, and with a due submission to the will of God (especially our sufferings for his truth and cause) it will certainly increase our happiness in the other world, and *work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

IV. The consideration of our present condition, and of our future hopes, should set us above the fondness of life, and the slavish fears of death. For our minds will never be raised to their true pitch and height, till we have in some good measure conquered these two passions, and made them subject to our reason.

As for this present life, and the enjoyment of it, S E R M.
 what is it that we see in them, that should make us XV.
 so strangely to dote upon them? *Quæ lucis miseris tam* 

dira cupido! This world at the best is but a very indifferent place, and he is the wisest man, that bears himself towards it with the most indifferent mind and affection; that is always willing to leave it, and yet patient to stay in it as long as God pleaseth. And as for death, tho' the dread of it be natural, yet why should the terrors of it be so very surprising and amazing to us, after we have considered, that to a good and pious soul, it is no other but the gate of heaven, and an entrance into eternal life? We are apt to wonder, to see a man undaunted at the approach of death, and to be not only contented, but chearful at the thoughts of his departure out of this world, this sink of sin, and vale of misery and sorrow. Whereas if all things be duly considered, it is a greater wonder that men are so patient to live, and that they are not glad of any fair excuse and opportunity of getting out of this strange country, and retiring home, and of ridding themselves of the troubles and inconveniences of life. For, considering the numerous troubles, and calamities we are liable to in a long pilgrimage, there are really but *three* considerations that I can readily think of, that can make this world, and our present condition in it, in any good measure tolerable to a wise man; *viz.* that God governs the world; that we are not always to stay in it; that there is a happiness designed and reserved for us in another place, which will abundantly recompence and make amends to us for all the troubles and sufferings of this life.

And yet it is strange to see how fast most men cling to life; and that even in old age, how they catch at every twig that may but hold them up a little while; and how fondly they hanker after a miserable life, when there is nothing more of pleasure to be enjoyed, nothing more of satisfaction to be expected and hoped for in it. When they are just putting

S E R M. ting into the port, and one would think, should rejoice at their very hearts that they see land; yet how
 XV. glad would they be then of any cross wind, that would carry them back into the sea again, as if they loved to be toss'd, and were fond of storms and tempests.

Nay, the very best of us, even after we have made that acknowledgment of *David, I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were,* are apt with him, to be still importuning God for a little longer life; *O spare me a little, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* And when God hath granted us this request, then we would be *spared yet a little longer.*

But let us remember, that God did not design us to continue always in this world; and that he hath on purpose made it so uneasy to us, to make us willing to leave it; and that so long as we linger here below, we are detained from our happiness; *while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* This consideration made *St. Paul* so desirous to be dissolved, because he knew, that when his earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved, he should have a much better habitation, a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This was that which made him so full of joy and triumph, at the thoughts of his leaving the world: *2 Tim. 4. 6. I am now ready (says he) to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous judge shall give me in that day.*

Nay, the consideration of this (tho' but obscurely apprehended by them) did raise the spirits of the wiser and better heathen, and fill them with great joy and comfort at the thoughts of their dissolution. With what constancy and evenness of mind did *Socrates* receive the sentence of death! and with what
 excellent

excellent discourse did he entertain his friends just before he drank off the fatal cup, and after he had taken it down, whilst death was gradually seizing upon him. One can hardly, without a very sensible transport, read *Cato's* discourse concerning his death, as it is represented by *Tully* in his book of old age. *I am (says he) transported with a desire of seeing my forefathers, those excellent persons, of whom I have heard, and read, and written; and now I am going to them, I would not willingly be drawn back into this world again. Quod si quis Deus mihi largiatur, ut ex hac ætate repuerescam, & in cunis vagiam, valde recusem. If some God would offer me, at this age, to be a child again, and to cry in the cradle, I would earnestly refuse it, and upon no terms accept it. And now that my race is almost run, and my course just finished, how loth should I be to be brought back, and made to begin again? For what advantage is there in life? Nay rather, what labour and trouble is there not in it? But let the benefit of it be what it will, there is certainly some measure of life, as well as of other things, and men ought to know when they have enough of it. O præclarum diem, cum in illud animorum concilium coetumque proficiscar, & cum ex hac turbâ & colluvione discedam: O blessed and glorious day, when I shall go to that great council and assembly of spirits, and have got out of this crowd and rabble! And if a heathen, who had but some obscure glimmerings of another life, and of the blessed state of departed souls, could speak thus chearfully of death; how much more may we, who have a clear and undoubted revelation of these things, and to whom life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel!*

V. We should always prefer our duty, and the keeping of a good conscience, before all the world; because it is, in truth, infinitely more valuable, if so be our souls be immortal, and do survive in another world, and we must there give a strict account of all the actions done by us in this life, and receive the

SERM. sentence of eternal happiness or misery, according to
 XV. *the things done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.* For as our Saviour argues concerning the case of denying him and his truth, to avoid temporal suffering and death; *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* When we are tempted by temporal interest and advantage, or by the fear of present loss and suffering, to deny or dissemble our religion, to do any thing that is sinful in any kind, and contrary to our duty and conscience, let us ask our selves, what will be the profit and advantage of it? what, if for fear of men, and what they can do to me, I incur the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God? This is infinitely more to be dreaded; and his frowns are a thousand times more terrible, than the bitterest wrath and cruellest malice of men. What, if to preserve this frail and mortal body, I shall evidently hazard the loss of my immortal soul; and to escape a temporal inconvenience, I forfeit everlasting happiness, and plunge myself into eternal misery and ruin? would not this be a wild bargain and a mad exchange, for any temporal advantage to lose the things that are eternal? and for the pleasing of our selves for a little while, to make our selves miserable for ever?

If we confess our selves to be *pilgrims and strangers on the earth*, and are persuaded of the promises of God concerning an *heavenly country*, where we hope to arrive after the *few and evil days of our pilgrimage* are over; let us not, by complying with the humours of strangers, and the vitious customs and practices of an evil world, bar our selves of our hopes, and banish our selves from that happy place, to which we all profess we are going.

We pretend to be travelling towards heaven: But if we *make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience*, we destroy our own hopes of ever arriving at that happy port. We do not live up to our expectation of a
 future

future happiness; if the unseen glories of another world do not raise us above all the temptations and terrors of sense. Our faith and hope have not their due and proper influence upon us, if they do not govern our lives and actions; and make us steadfast in the profession of our holy religion, and in the conscientious practice of it. St. Paul reasoned himself into this holy resolution, from the hopes of a blessed resurrection, *Acts* 24. 15, 16. *I have hope, says he, toward God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; ἐν ᾧ ἐγώ, for this cause therefore, I exercise myself always to have a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men.*

VI. And lastly, If we be sojourners and travellers in this world, we should often think of our end, and carefully mind the way to it. Our end is everlasting happiness, and the direct way to it is by a constant and sincere and universal obedience to the laws and commandments of God. And this itself is so plain a way, that a sincere and honest man can hardly err in it. And therefore we must not suffer ourselves to be led and trained out of it, upon any pretence whatsoever; not by the wildfire of pretended illuminations and enthusiasms; nor by the confident pretence of an infallible guide, that will needs shew us another way, and persuade us to follow him blindfold in it. Let us not quit *the infallible rule of God's word*, to follow any guide whatsoever. *If an Apostle or an Angel from heaven, preach any other doctrine and way to heaven, let him be accursed.* He who is *the way, and the truth, and the life*, when he was consulted with about the way to eternal happiness, knew no other but this. For when the young man ask'd him; *Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal?* His answer was, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* 'Tis true indeed, that by reason of our corrupt inclinations within, and powerful temptations without, this way (especially at our first setting out) is rugged and difficult. So our Lord
hath

S E R M. hath forewarned us, telling us, that *strait is the gate,*
 XV. *and narrow is the way that leadeth to life,* and that there
 be few that find it ; therefore we should strive to enter
 in, take great care and pains to discern the right way,
 and to overcome the difficulties of our first entrance
 into it ; and should often pray to God as David did,
Psal. 119. 19. I am a stranger in the earth ; hide not
thy commandments from me , Psal. 139. 23, 24. Search
me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know
my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Thus, if we would always have our end in our eye ;
 it would both be a direction to us in our way, and
 an encouragement to quicken our pace in it ; there
 being no more powerful motive to a good life, than
 to be assured, that, *If we have our fruit unto holiness,*
*our end shall be everlasting life. **

May 11 1885

S E R M O N XVI.

The Presence of the Messias, the Glory
of the Second Temple.

HAGGAI ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry-land: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

*Christmas
Day*

TH E author of this prophecy was the first of the three prophets, which God sent to the people of *Israel* after the captivity; and this prophecy contains several messages from God, to the princes, and elders, and people of *Israel*, in which he reproves their slackness and negligence in the building of the temple, and encourageth them thereto, by the promise of his assistance; and tells them, that however in respect of the magnificence of the building, and the rich ornaments of it, it should be incomparably short of *Solomon's* temple (which some that were then alive had seen in its glory) yet

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SERM. yet in other respects it should far excel it: for
 XVI. the time would come, that this second temple should
 be graced with the presence of the *Messias*, which
 would be a greater glory to it, than all the riches
 of *Solomon's* temple.

And this is fully expressed in the words which I
 have read unto you, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet
 once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens,
 and the earth and the sea, and the dry land: And I
 will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall
 come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the
 Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,
 saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house
 shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of
 hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord
 of hosts.*

Now, that it is some very great thing which is
 here foretold and promised, for the honour of this
 second temple, no man can doubt, that considers in
 what a solemn manner it is here expressed; this great
 and glorious title, *the Lord of hosts*, being no less
 than five several times used within the compass of these
 four verses; the like instance whereto is not, perhaps
 in the whole bible: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet
 once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens
 and the earth*, ver. 6. *And I will fill this house with
 glory, saith the Lord of hosts*, ver. 7. *The silver is
 mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts*,
 ver. 8. And twice ver. 9. *The glory of this latter house
 shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of
 hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord
 of hosts.* So that by the solemn manner of expressing
 it, we may imagine, that it is some very great thing
 which is spoken of, and such as the like had never
 been before; and such was *the incarnation and coming
 of the Messias*.

I know that the modern *Jews* will by no means
 have this text to be understood of the *Messias*, and
 not without cause; for he that is spoken of in the text,

was

was to come into the second temple, which hath now S E R M.
XVI. been destroyed about 1600 years ago; and they do not believe the *Messias* to be yet come; and therefore whatever shift they make, they must interpret this text, of some other person than the *Messias*: But then it is plain for what reason they do so, it being evident from their own *Talmud*, that the ancient *Jews* did understand it of the *Messias*; but being hardened in their unbelief, they pervert all those texts whereby they might be convinced, that *Jesus* our blessed Saviour was the true *Messias*.

And indeed, whoever carefully considers the several expressions and circumstances of this prediction, cannot understand it of any other. To make this evident, I shall explain the several expressions in this text, *thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once, it is a little while. Yet a little while*, so it is in the *Hebrew*. *Yet once more*, so the *LXXII* render it, and so it is quoted from the *LXXII* in the new testament, *Heb.* 12. 26. and this sense the *Hebrew* word may likewise bear, and our translation of the text takes them both in, *yet once it is a little while*.

If we take the words in the first sense, *yet a little while*, they signify, that God was then beginning those changes in the world, which were to precede and make way for the coming of the *Messias*. This indeed was not till about four hundred years after; but a great while before that time God began those changes in the world, which were to prepare the way for his coming; and considering the long time which was past from the first promise made to *Abraham*, four hundred years in comparison of that may seem but a little while. But I rather chuse the latter sense of this phrase, *yet once more*; because the *Hebrew* will bear it, and because it is so quoted in the new testament; as if the prophet had said, that God had before done a great thing in the world, and accompanied with great miracles; viz. the giving of the law by *Moses*, which was attended with great commotions,

S E R M. motions, both in *Egypt*, by bringing the people of
 XVI. *Israel* out from thence with a mighty hand, and by
 destroying the nations before them, whose land God
 gave them for a possession; but now he would do one
 greater thing more, *the sending of the Messias*, and
 the *planting of his religion in the world*; in order
 whereunto there should be much greater, and more
 universal commotions and changes in the world, and
 more and greater miracles wrought; yet once more,
*and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the
 sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations.*
 From which words the apostle to the *Hebrews* ar-
 gues the abolishing of the *Jewish* dispensation, and
 the bringing of another that should be unalterable,
Heb. 12. 27. And this word, yet once more (says the
 apostle) *signifies the removing of those things that are
 shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may
 remain.* And this I shall have occasion to explain
 more fully in the following parts of this discourse.

Yet once more I will shake the heavens and the earth,
 &c. For the understanding whereof we are to con-
 sider that the *Hebrews* have no one word whereby to
 express *the world*, and therefore they do it by an
 enumeration of the principal parts of it. So *Gen.*
1. when Moses would express the creation of the
 world, he says, *in the beginning God created the heaven
 and the earth.* And so *St. Peter*, when he would ex-
 press the revolution of all things, after the universal
 conflagration of the world, calls it, *a new heaven,*
and a new earth, 2 *Pet. 3. 13. Nevertheless we, ac-*
ording to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new
earth; that is, a new world, a quite other frame and
 state of things, than that which we now see. And
 so the prophet here in the text, to express the great
 commotions and changes that should be in the world
 before the coming of the *Messias*, says, that God
will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and
the dry land; that is, he would cause great revolutions
 in the world; there should be great wars and con-
 fusions,

fusions, and the empires of the world should pass from one hand to another. And thus we find this expression interpreted, ver. 21, 22. of this chapter, *I will shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations.* And to shew that by *shaking the heavens and the earth*, is meant great changes in the world, and as it were an universal commotion of it, he adds in the text, by way of farther explication, *and I will shake all nations.*

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And then it follows, *and the desire of all nations shall come.* This we (as the ancient Jews also did) take to be a plain character and description of the *Messias*, he is *the desire of all nations*; he whom all nations had reason to desire, because of those great blessings and benefits which he was to bring to the world. Thus interpreters generally understand these words, and it is very true the *Messias* was so: But this does not seem to be the true importance of this phrase; for the *Hebrew* word signifies *expectation* as well as *desire*, and so I should rather chuse to render it, *the expectation of all nations shall come*; which signifies, that about the time of the coming of the *Messias*, not only the *Jews*, but other nations, should be in a general expectation of some great prince then to appear; which was most eminently accomplished in our blessed Saviour, as I shall shew by and by.

And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts, speaking of the second temple, which was then in building, which though it fell very much short of *Solomon's*, in point of state and magnificence; yet by being honoured with the presence of the *Messias*, it should be much more glorious than *Solomon's* temple. *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts*; not that God wanted the command of gold and silver, to have made the second temple equal to *Solomon's* in outward glory and splendor; he could easily have made it so in that respect; and *Josephus* tells us, that not long before

S E R M. fore the time of our Saviour's coming, *Herod* had
 XVI. built and beautified it to that degree, that in some
 respects it excelled *Solomon's*; and of this some understand the next words, *the glory of this latter house shall be greater, than of the former*; namely, that this was accomplished in that beauty and magnificence which was added to it, when it was re-edified by *Herod* the great: But however that be, this is certain, that it was much more glorious in another respect, namely, that it entertained the *Messias*, the great expectation and blessing of all nations.

And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts, Some understand this, of that universal peace which was throughout the world, when our Saviour was born in the reign of *Augustus Cæsar*. Others with great probability interpret this of the *Messias* himself, who is called here by the name of *peace*; and so some of the ancient *Jews* understood it; in this place, *will I give peace*, that is, the *Messias*. For the *Hebrew* word signifies all kind of happiness, and so it includes all those blessings and benefits, that happiness and salvation which the *Messias* brought to the world. And this will appear very probable, if we consider, how frequently in scripture this title is given to the *Messias*. *Isai.* 9. 6. he is called the prince of peace; and *Zach.* 9. 10. it is said of him, that he should speak peace to the nations; and the apostle to the *Hebrews* parallels him with *Melchisedech* in this particular, that he was king of *Salem*, that is king of peace; and which is very little different from this, he is frequently in scripture called *salvation*, which signifies the happiness of being rescued and delivered from all kind of evil; as *peace* signifies all kind of good *Isai.* 49. 6. *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation to the end of the earth*: And *Luke* 2. 30. When *Simeon* had our blessed Saviour in his arms, when he was first brought into the temple, he calls him the *salvation of God*; mine eyes (saith he to God) have seen thy salvation; and

and John 4. 22. *Salvation is of the Jews*, that is, the *Messias* was to be of that nation. But which is more exprefs, *Christ* is called *our peace*, Eph. 2. 14. Nay, he is exprefsly called *peace* or *the peace*, Micah. 5. 5. *And this man* (speaking of the *Messias*) *shall be the peace*, that is, one of his names or titles shall be *peace*. So that I make little doubt, but that in this expreffion the in text, of *giving peace*, is meant, giving the *Messias*; and that this is render'd as the reason, why the glory of the second temple should be greater than of the first, because in that place the *Messias* should appear, and remarkably shew himself. God could have given this second temple, if he had thought fit, as much outward glory and beauty as that of *Solomon's* building; for *silver and gold are his*, and all the riches of the world are at his command; but he chose to put a far greater honour upon it than that of silver and gold, and to make it much more glorious in another respect, *the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former; because in this place I will give the Messias, the peace, and happiness, and salvation of mankind, and incomparably the greatest blessing that ever was given to the world.*

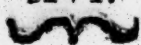
The words being thus explained, it will now be more easy to shew how the several parts of this prediction do agree to *our blessed Saviour*, and to no other.

I. That there should be great changes and commotions in the world before his coming; *I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations*; and then he should come.

II. That about the time of his coming, the world should be in general expectation of him; *and the expectation of all nations shall come.*

III. That he should come during the continuance of the second temple; for it was his coming that should fill that house with glory, and in that place the *Messias*, who is called *peace*, is promised to be

S E R M. given; and in this place will I give peace, saith the
XVI. Lord of hosts.



IV. That this coming of the *Messias* should be the last dispensation of God for the salvation of men, and consequently should be perpetual and unalterable; yet once more, and I will shake the heavens and the earth; yet once more, from whence the apostle to the *Hebrews* argues, that the gospel should be a perpetual and unalterable dispensation. Of these I shall speak severally, and as briefly as I can.

I. Here is a prediction of great changes and commotions in the world before the coming of the *Messias*; thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; plainly signifying hereby, that before the coming of the *Messias* (who is here called the desire and expectation of all nations) there should be very great commotions and changes in the world, that the empire of the world should be overturned; for so I have told you, that this expression of shaking the heavens and the earth is explained, ver. 21. of this chapter, I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. And this was fulfilled in a most remarkable manner, between the time of this prophecy, and the coming of our blessed Saviour, during which time (though it was but four hundred years) there happened greater commotions, and much more considerable revolutions in the great kingdoms of the world, than had done in above two thousand years before, and in almost one thousand seven hundred years since; so that it is no wonder, that the prediction of these things is by God himself expressed in so very solemn a manner, as I observed before.

At the time of this prophecy, the empire of the world was newly translated from the *Assyrians* to the *Medes* and *Persians*; and not long after, the *Grecians* under *Alexander the Great* quite overthrew the
Persian

Persian empire, and that by as sudden a change as SERM. XVI.
was ever perhaps made in the world, possessing them-
selves by so swift and speedy a conquest of a great
part of the then known world, as if to pass through
it, and to conquer it, had been all one.

After the death of *Alexander*, the empire of the
Grecians was shared among his great captains, whom
the *Romans* by degrees conquered, besides a great
many other kingdoms which *Alexander* never saw,
and some of them perhaps had never heard of. And
at last the empire of the world, in all its greatness
and glory was possessed by *Augustus*, in whose time
our blessed Saviour was born.

So that here were mighty commotions in the
world, wonderful changes of kingdoms and empires,
before the coming of the *Messias*; far greater, and
of much larger extent, than those that were in *Egypt*
and *Palestine*, at the bringing of the children of *Is-
rael* out of *Egypt*, and the giving of the law from
mount *Sinai*. And these did not only go before the
coming of the *Messias*, but they made way for the
more easy propagating of his doctrine and religion;
for the *Grecians*, and especially the *Romans*, settled
their conquests in such a manner, as in a good mea-
sure to propagate their language among the nations
which they conquer'd; and particularly the *Romans*
did make the ways for travel and commerce much
more easy and commodious than ever they were be-
fore, by employing their armies, when they had no
other work, to make high-ways, for the convenience
of passage from the station of one legion to another;
the benefit and effect whereof, we in *England* enjoy
to this day; (a pattern to all princes and states that
have necessary occasion for armies how to employ
them :) And this very thing proved afterwards a
mighty advantage for the more easy and speedy
spreading of christianity in the world.

II. Another part of this prophecy is, that about
the time of the coming of the *Messias*, the world
should

S E R M. should be in a general expectation of him; and the
 XVI. expectation of all nations shall come: And I doubt not
 but this character of the *Messias* is taken out of that famous prophecy concerning him, *Gen. 49. 10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come,* (and by *Shiloh*, the ancient *Jews* generally understood the *Messias*) and to him shall the gathering of the people be; or as it is rendered by the *Septuagint*, and several other translations, and he shall be the expectation of the nations. In allusion to which ancient prophecy concerning him, he is here in the text called, *The expectation of all nations*; and so by the prophet *Malachi*, chap. 3. ver. 1. *And the Lord whom ye expect, or look for, shall suddenly come into his temple.* Now this part of the prediction in the text, was most eminently fulfilled in our blessed Saviour. For about the time of his coming, the *Jews* were in a general expectation of him, as appears not only from that ancient and general tradition of theirs, from the school of *Elias*, that at the end of the second two thousand years of the world, the *Messias* should come; (and our blessed Saviour's coming did accordingly happen at that time;) but likewise from that particular computation of the *Jewish* doctors, not long before our Saviour's coming, who upon a solemn debate of the matter, did determine that the *Messias* would come within fifty years. And this is farther confirmed, from the great jealousy which *Herod* had concerning a *King of the Jews*, that was expected to be born about that time; and from that remarkable testimony in *Josephus*, who tells us, *That the Jews rebelled against the Romans, being encouraged thereto by a famous prophecy in their scriptures, That about that time a great Prince should be born among them, that should rule the world:* And *Josephus* flattered *Vespasian* so far, as to make him believe that he was the man; and thereupon persuaded him to destroy the line of *David*, out of which the tradition was, that the *Messias* should spring; as if the accomplishment

plishment of a divine prediction could be hindered S E R M.
XVI.
by any human endeavour.

And this was not only the general expectation of the *Jews* about that time, but of a great part of the world; as appears from those two famous testimonies of two of the most eminent *Roman* historians, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*. The words of *Suetonius* are these, *Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in satis, ut Judæa profecti rerum potirentur*: There was an ancient and general opinion, famous throughout all the eastern parts, that the fates had determined that there should come out of *Judea* those that should govern the world; and he adds what I quoted before out of *Josephus*, *Id Judæi ad se trabentes rebellârunt*; That the *Jews* taking this to themselves, did thereupon rebel. Now it is very remarkable, that the very words of this tradition seem to be a verbal translation of that prophecy in *Micah*, that out of *Judah* should come the governor: *Ut Judæa profecti rerum potirentur*. The other testimony is out of *Tacitus*; and his words are these, (*lib. 21. §. 13.*) *Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur*: A great many (says he) were possessed with a persuasion, that it was contained in the ancient books of the priests, that at that very time the east should prevail, and that they who should govern the world, were to come out of *Judea*. By the ancient books of the priests, he in all probability, means the ancient prophecies of scripture; for the last expression is the same with that of *Suetonius*, taken out of the prophet *Micah*; and the other, that the east should prevail, does plainly refer to that title given to the *Messias* by the prophet *Zachary*, chap. 6. 12. where he is called the man whose name is *נוצ*, which signifies *Oriens* and *Germen*, both the east and a branch; our translation hath it, the man whose name is the branch; but it might as well be rendered, the man whose name is the east. Thus you see this character of our Saviour in this prophecy

SERM. most literally fulfilled, that he was *the expectation of*
 XVI. *all nations.* I proceed to the

 III^d Circumstance of this prediction, That he who is here foretold, should come during the continuance of this second temple; because it was his presence that should *fill that house with glory*; and it was in that place that the *Messias*, who is called *the peace*, is promised to be given; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts. And this is likewise most expressly foretold by the prophet *Malachi*, chap. 3. 1. *Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye look for, shall suddenly come into his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts:* And accordingly *Jesus*, our blessed Saviour, came during the second temple; he was presented there by his parents, and owned by *Simeon* for the *Messias*; he disputed there, and taught frequently there, and by his presence filled that house with glory. For that the Son of God taught publicly there, was a greater honour to it, than all the silver and gold of *Solomon's* temple.

And not long after his death (according to his express prediction) this second temple was destroyed to the ground; so that not one stone of it was left upon another. And when, some hundred of years after, it was attempted to be rebuilt three several times, the last whereof was by *Julian* the apostate, in opposition to christianity, and to our Saviour's prediction; fire came out of the foundation, and destroyed the workmen; so that they desisted in great terror, and durst never attempt it afterwards. And this not only the christian writers of that age, in great numbers, do testify, but *Ammianus Marcellinus* (a heathen historian who lived in that time) does also give us a very particular account of this memorable matter. So that if by *the expectation of the nations* be here meant the *Messias* (as I have plainly shewn) then he is long since come, and was no other than *Jesus*, our blessed Sa-
 viour

viour, who, according to this prophecy, was to fill SERM.
the second temple with glory; which hath now been XVI.
 demolished above one thousand six hundred years ago, and the re-building whereof hath been so often and so remarkably hindred from heaven. The consideration of all which were sufficient to convince the *Jews* of their vain expectation of a *Messias* yet to come, were they not so obstinately rooted and fixed in their infidelity. There remains now the

IV. And last circumstance of this prophecy, viz: That the coming of the *Messias* was to be the last dispensation of God, for the salvation of men, and consequently, was to be perpetual and unchangeable: *Yet once more, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: And I will shake all nations, and the expectation of all nations shall come. Yet once more*; from which words the Apostle to the *Hebrews* argues the perpetuity of the Gospel, and that it was the dispensation which should never be changed. *Heb. 12. 27. And this word, yet once more, signifies, the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.* And then it follows, *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, &c.* It was usual with the *Jews* to describe the times of the Gospel, by *the kingdom of the Messias*; and accordingly the Apostle here calls the dispensation of the Gospel, *a kingdom which cannot be moved*: In opposition to the law, which was an imperfect and alterable dispensation. For this is plainly the scope of the Apostle's reasoning; namely, to convince the *Jews* that they were now under a more gracious and perfect dispensation than that of the law, ver. 18. *Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire*; meaning mount Sinai, which was a sensible literal mountain, *a mountain that might be touched*, in opposition to the mystical and spiritual mount *Sion*, by which the dispensation of the Gospel is described: Which, by the way, prevents the ob-

S E R M. jectiō of its being called *the mountain that might be*
 XVI. *touched*, when it was forbidden to be touched upon
 pain of death; *Ye are not come to the mount that might*
 be touched; that is, I am not now speaking of a literal
 and sensible mountain, such as was mount *Sinai*, from
 whence the law was given; but of that spiritual and
 heavenly dispensation of the Gospel, which was ty-
 pify'd by mount *Sion* and by *Jerusalem*; but ye are
 come to mount *Sion*, and unto the city of the living God,
 the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and to *Jesus* the mediator of
 the new covenant. And then he cautions them to take
 heed how they reject him that came from heaven,
 to make this last revelation of God to the world,
 which because of the clearness and perfection of it,
 should never need to receive any change, ver. 25. See
 that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped
 not, who refused him that spake on the earth, viz. *Mo-*
ses, who delivered the law from mount *Sinai*) much
 more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him
 that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the
 earth, (alluding to the earthquake at the giving of
 the law) but now he hath promised, saying, yet once
 more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; that
 is, the whole world, in order to the coming of the
Messias, and the planting of the gospel in the world;
 and then he argues from the words *once more*, that the
 former dispensation should be removed, to make way
 for that which should perpetually remain.

And indeed there is no need of any farther reve-
 lation after this; nor of any change of that religion
 which was brought from heaven by the Son of God;
 because of the perfection of it, and its fitness to reform
 the world, and to recover mankind out of their lapsed
 and degenerate condition, and to bring them to hap-
 piness; both by the purity of its doctrine, and the
 power of its arguments, to work upon the minds of
 men, by the clear discovery of the mighty rewards
 and punishments of another world.

And

And now the proper inference from all this discourse, is the very same with that which the apostle makes, from the consideration of the perfection and excellency of this revelation, which God had made to the world by his Son. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for how shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven?* And at the 28th verse of that chapter, *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear,* that is, let us live as becomes those to whom God hath made so clear and perfect a revelation of his will. We have all the advantages of the divine revelation which the world ever had, and the last and most perfect that the world ever shall have: We have not only *Moses and the prophets*, but that doctrine which *the Son of God* came down from heaven on purpose to declare to the world; God hath vouchsafed to us that clear and compleat revelation of his will, which he denied to *many prophets and righteous men, who desired to see the things which we see, but could not see them, and to hear the things which we hear, but could not hear them.* There were good men in the world under those imperfect revelations which God made to them; but we have far greater advantages, and more powerful arguments to be good than ever they had. And as we ought thankfully to acknowledge these blessed advantages; so ought we likewise, with the greatest care and diligence to improve them.

And now how does the serious consideration of this condemn all impenitent sinners under the gospel, who will not be reclaimed from their sins, and persuaded to goodness, by all that God can do; by the most plain declaration of his will to the world, by the most perfect precepts and directions for a good life; by the most encouraging promises to obedience, and by the most severe threatnings of an eternal and unutterable ruin, in case of disobedience; *by the wrath of God,*

SER M. God, revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and
 XVI. *unrighteousness of men*; by the terrors of the great
 day, and the vengeance of eternal fire; by the wonderful and amazing condescension of the Son of God, appearing in our nature; by his merciful undertaking for the redemption of lost and sinful man; by his cruel sufferings for our sins, and by the kindest offers of pardon and reconciliation in his blood, and by the glorious hopes of eternal life.

What could God have done more for us, than he hath done? What greater concernment could he shew for our salvation, than *to send his own Son, his only Son, to seek and save us*? And what greater demonstration could he give of his love to us, than *to give the Son of his love to die for us*? This is the last effort that the divine mercy and goodness will make upon mankind. So the Apostle tells us in the beginning of this epistle, chap. 1. 1. that *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son*: And if we will not hear him, he will speak no more; after this it is not to be expected that he should make any farther attempts for our recovery, he can send no greater and dearer person to us, than *his own Son*. If we despise him, whom will we reverence? if we reject him, and the great salvation which he brings and offers to us, we have all the reason in the world to believe that our case is desperate, and that we shall die in our sins. This was the condemnation of the Jews, that they did not receive and believe on him whom God had sent. And if we who profess to believe on him, and to receive his doctrine, be found disobedient to it, in our lives, we have reason to fear that our condemnation will be far heavier than theirs: For since the appearance of the Son of God for the salvation of men, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, especially against those who retain the truth of God in unrighteousness; that is, against those

those who entertain the light of God's truth in their S E R M. minds, but do not suffer it to have its proper effect XVI. and influence upon their hearts and lives ; and make that a prisoner, which would make them free. So our Lord tells us, that *the truth shall make us free* ; but if after *we have received the knowledge of the truth*, we are still *the servants of sin* ; our condemnation is much worse, than if *the Son of God* had never come : For the christian religion hath done nothing, if it do not take men off from their sins, and teach them to live well.

Especially at *this time* when we are celebrating the coming of the Son of God, to destroy the works of the devil, we should take great heed, that we be not found guilty of any impiety or wickedness ; because this is directly contrary to the main design of the grace of God, which brings salvation, and hath appeared to all men (and the appearance whereof we do at *this time* commemorate) for that *teacheth men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world* : And we cannot gratify the devil more, than by shewing ourselves more diligent than ordinary to uphold his works, at *this very time*, when the Son of God was manifested on purpose to dissolve them : We cannot possibly chuse a worse, a more improper season to sin in, than when we are celebrating the birth of the blessed Jesus, who came to save us from our sins. This is, as if a sick man, for joy that a famous physician is come to his house, should run into all manner of excess, and so do all he can to enflame his disease, and make his case desperate. Not but that our inward joy may lawfully be accompanied with all outward innocent expressions of it : But we cannot be truly thankful, if we allow ourselves at *this time* in any thing contrary to the purity and sobriety of the Gospel. It is matter of just and sad complaint, being of great scandal to our Saviour, and his holy religion, that such irregular and extravagant things

SER M. things are at *this time* commonly done by many, who
 XVI. call themselves Christians ; and done under a pre-
 tence of doing honour to the memory of Christ's
 birth ; as if, because *the Son of God* was at this time
 made *man*, it were fit for *men* to make themselves
beasts.

If we would honour him indeed, we must take care that our joy do not degenerate into sin and sensuality, and that we do not express it by lewdness and luxury, by intemperance and excess, by prodigal gaming, and profuse wasting of our estates, *as the manner of some is* ; as if we intended literally to requite our Saviour, *who being rich, for our sakes became poor*. This is the way of *parting with houses and land, and becoming poor for his sake*, for which he will never thank, nor reward us. This is not to commemorate the coming of our Saviour ; but to contradict it, and openly to declare that we will uphold *the works of the devil*, in despite of *the Son of God, who came to destroy them*. It is for all the world like that lewd and senseless piece of loyalty, too much in fashion some years ago, of being drunk for the king. Good God ! that ever it should pass for a piece of religion among Christians, to run into all manner of excess for twelve days together in honour of our Saviour ! A greater aggravation of sin cannot easily be imagined, than to abuse the memory of the greatest blessing that ever was, *Christ coming into the world to take away sin*, into an opportunity of committing it ; this is to represent the Son of God as a patron of sin and licentiousness, and to treat him more contumeliously than the *Jews* did, who bowed the knee to him and mocked him, and called him king, and spat upon him ; and under a pretence of rejoicing for his birth, to *crucify to ourselves afresh the Lord of life and glory* ; and to *put him to an open shame*.

I will conclude all with the Apostle's exhortation, *Rom. 13. 12, 13, 14. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let*

us walk decently as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

SERM.
XVI.

Now to our most gracious and merciful God, the great friend and lover of souls, who regarded us in our low and lost condition, and cast an eye of pity upon us, when *we were in our blood, and no other eye pitied us*, and when we had lost and ruined ourselves, was pleased in tender compassion to mankind, to send his only begotten Son into the world, to seek and save us, and by the purity of his doctrine, and the pattern of his life, and the sacrifice of his death, to purchase eternal life for us, and to direct and lead us in the way to it: And to him also, the blessed Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, who came down from heaven, that he might carry us thither, and took human nature upon him, that we thereby might be *made partakers of a divine nature*; and *humiliated himself to death, even the death of the cross*, that he might exalt us to glory and honour; and whilst we were bitter enemies to him, gave such a demonstration of his love to us, as never any man did to his best friend: Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb that was slain; to God, even our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; to him, who bath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and bath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and honour, dominion and power, now and for ever. Amen.

Preached at
St. Peters's
Cornhill on
the feast of
the annun-
ciation.
1691.

S E R M O N XVII.

Christ Jesus the only Mediator between
God and Men.

I Tim. ii. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between
God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who
gave himself a ransom for all.*

S E R M.
XVII.

TH E S E words contain in them these four
propositions; three of them exprefs, and
the fourth of them sufficiently implied in
the text.

I. *That there is one God.*

II. *That there is one mediator between God and men;
Christ Jesus.*

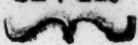
III. *That he gave himself a ransom for all.*

IV. *That the mediation or intercession of Jesus Christ,
is founded in the redemption of mankind.* For this seems
to be the reason why it is added, that *he gave him-
self a ransom for all*, to signifie to us, that because *he
gave himself a ransom for all*, therefore he intercedes
for all. In virtue of that sacrifice which he offered
to God for the salvation of men, he offers up our
prayers to God; and therefore it is acceptable to
him, *that we should pray for all men.* This seems to
be the true connection of the apostle's discourse, and
the force of his reasoning, about our putting up pub-
lick prayers for all men.

See a Sermon
concerning
the Unity of
the Divine
Nature;
Printed in
the year
1693.

I have in a former discourse handled the first of
these. I proceed now to the

II. *That*

II. *That there is one mediator between God and men,* S E R M.
the man Christ Jesus. One mediator, that is, but one; XVII.
for the expression is the very same concerning *one* 
God, and one mediator; and therefore if the apostle
when he says, *there is one God,* certainly means that
there is *but one God;* it is equally certain, that when
he says, *there is one mediator between God and men,* he
means, there is *but one mediator, viz. Christ Jesus.*
He is the only mediator between God and men.

In the handling of this argument, I shall proceed
in this method.

I. I shall endeavour to shew, that God hath ap-
pointed but one mediator, or advocate, or intercessor
in heaven for us; in whose name, and by whose me-
diation and intercession, we are to offer up our pray-
ers and services to God.

II. That this is most agreeable to one main end
and design of the christian religion, and of our Sa-
viour's coming into the world.

III. That it is likewise evident *from the nature and*
reason of the thing it self, that *there is but one mediator*
and intercessor in heaven for us, to offer up our pray-
ers to God; and that there can be no more. And
then,

IV. And *lastly,* I shall endeavour to shew, how
contrary to the doctrine of the christian religion, con-
cerning *one mediator and intercessor in heaven for us,*
the doctrine and practice of the church of Rome in
this matter is, in their invocation of Angels, and
the blessed virgin, and the saints, and making use
of their mediation and intercession with God for sin-
ners; as likewise how contrary it is to the doctrine
and practice of the primitive christian church: And
then I shall answer their several pretences for this
doctrine and practice; and shew that this practice
is not only needless, but useless and unprofitable; and
not only so, but very dangerous and impious.

First, I shall endeavour to shew, that God hath
appointed but one mediator, or advocate, or inter-
cessor

SERM. cessor in heaven for us, in whose name, and by whose
 XVII. intercession we are to offer up all our prayers and ser-
 vices to God.

Besides that it is expressly said here in the text, *there is but one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, and that the scripture no where mentions any other : I say, besides this, we are constantly directed to offer up our prayers and thanksgivings, and to perform all acts of worship in his name, and no other ; and with a promise, that the prayers and services, which we offer in his name will be graciously answered and accepted : *John 14. 13, 14. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do ; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. And chap. 16. 23, 24. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing : verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name ; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. In that day ; that is, when I have left the world, and am gone to my Father, as he explains it in the 28th verse, In that day ye shall ask me nothing ; but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. That is, you shall not need to address your prayers to me, but to my Father in my name. And ver. 26, 27. At that day ye shall ask in my name ; that is, from the time that I am ascended into heaven, ye shall put up all your prayers and requests to God, in my name ; and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you ; for the Father himself loveth you ; that is, I need not tell you (though I shall certainly do it) that I will intercede with the Father for you ; for he of himself is kindly disposed and affected towards you, for my sake ; The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me.*

St. Paul likewise commands christians to perform all acts of religious worship in the name of Christ : *Col. 3. 16, 17. Singing with grace in your hearts to the*

the Lord, and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all SERM.
in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God XVII.
and the Father by him. And giving this precept of
addressing all our prayers and thanksgivings to God,
by Jesus Christ, as the only mediator between God
and us, is the more remarkable, because it is given
in opposition to the worshipping of God by any
other mediators and intercessors in heaven for us;
and to that superstition which had begun so early to
prevail among some Christians at *Colosse* and *Laodi-*
cea, of worshipping God by the mediation and inter-
cession of Angels, against which he had cautioned in
the former chapter, ver. 18, 19. *Let no man beguile*
you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and wor-
shipping of Angels, not holding the head. Intimating,
that for Christians to address themselves to God, by
any other mediator but Jesus Christ only, was a de-
fection from Christ *the head*, and *high-priest of our*
profession. And that this is the apostle's meaning,
Theodoret assures us, in his comment upon this place,
where he tells us, that some who maintained an ob-
servance of the law, together with the gospel, assert-
ed also, *that Angels were to be worshipped*, saying, *that*
the law was given by them. And this custom, he tells
us, remained a long time in *Phrygia* and *Pisidia*, and
that upon this account it was, that the synod of *La-*
dicea in *Phrygia* (about the middle of the fourth cen-
tury) forbade Christians by a law, to pray to Angels.
And yet more expressly in his comment upon those
words, chap. 3. ver. 17. *Whatsoever ye do in word*
or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks
to God and the Father by him. For *because* (says he)
they (meaning those of whom St. Paul warns the
Colossians to beware, *because they*) *did command men to*
worship Angels, he enjoins the contrary; that they should
adorn both their words and actions with the memory (or
mention of) the name of Christ their Lord: And send ye
up (saith he) thanksgiving to God and the Father by
him, and not by the Angels. And then he makes
Vol. IV. T mention

S E R M. mention of the Canon of the synod of *Laodicea*,
 XVII. *which* (says he) *in pursuance of this rule, and being desirous to cure that old disease, made it a law, that none should pray unto Angels, nor forsake the Lord Jesus Christ.* It seems then that some relicks of that impious custom, of praying to Angels, which *Theodoret* here calls, *that old disease*, had continued from *St. Paul's* time, to the council of *Laodicea*, which was the occasion of that severe Canon then made about that matter; the very words whereof I will set down, because they are remarkable; viz. *that Christians ought not to forsake the church of God, and go away from it, and to invoke Angels, and to make conventicles, all which are forbidden. If any therefore be found giving himself to this secret idolatry, let him be anathema; because he hath forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and is gone over to idolatry. What shall be said to them, who do not only secretly, and in their private devotions, but in the publick assemblies of Christians, and in the most publick offices of their church, invoke Angels, and pray to them? So that it was praying to Angels (or making use of them as mediators and intercessors with God for us) which St. Paul here reproves so severely in the Colossians, as a defection from Christ and the christian religion.*

And indeed, considering how frequently the scripture speaks of Christ, as *our only way to God, and by whom alone we have access to the throne of grace*, we cannot doubt but that God hath constituted him our only mediator and intercessor, by whom we are to address all our requests to God, *John 14. 6. Jesus there saith unto Thomas, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the way, the truth, and the life; that is, the true and living way to the Father (which the apostle calls a new and living way, Heb. 10. 19, 20. Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated*

secrated for us.) No man cometh to the Father but S E R M.
by me; that is, we can have no access to God by XVII.
prayer, or by any other acts of religious worship,
but by him. So St. Paul tells us, *Eph. 2. 18.*
For through him (speaking of Christ) we both have
an access by one spirit unto the Father. We both, that
is, both Jews and Gentiles. Under the law the
Jews had access to God by their high-priest, who
interceded with God, and offered up prayers in be-
half of the people. The Gentiles, they addressed
themselves to God by innumerable mediators, by
Angels, and the souls of their departed heroes,
which were the Pagan saints. Instead of all these,
God hath appointed one mediator and intercessor in
heaven for us, Jesus the Son of God, and by him all
mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, have access by one
spirit unto the Father.

And we have no need of any other, as the apostle to the *Hebrews* reasons, chap. 7. 24, 25. *But this person (speaking of Christ) because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, ἀμετάκλητον, a priesthood which doth not pass from one to another, as the priesthood under the law did, when upon the death of one high-priest, another succeeded in his place; but our high-priest under the gospel, since he abides for ever, is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. So that Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient mediator, and able to carry on and accomplish the work of our salvation from first to last: And as we do not find that God hath appointed any other; so we are sure, that there needs no other, since he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, and that he lives for ever to make intercession for us.*

Secondly, I proceed now in the second place to shew, that this doctrine or principle of *one mediator between God and man*, is most agreeable to one main end and design of the christian religion, and

S E R M. of our Saviour's coming into the world, which was
 XVII. to destroy idolatry out of the world; which St. John
 calls the works of the devil, 1 John 3. 8. For this
 purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might
 destroy, *ἵνα λύσῃ* that he might dissolve or demolish the
 works of the devil; by which St. John does more es-
 pecially mean the idolatrous worship of the heathen,
 which consisted in the multitude of their gods, and
 the bloody and barbarous rites and sacrifices, where-
 by they worshipped them; and likewise in the mul-
 titude of their mediators between the gods and men,
 who were also esteemed by them an inferiour sort of
 deities. Both these kinds of idolatry had strangely
 prevailed, and over-run the world before the ap-
 pearance of our Lord and Saviour, who came on
 purpose to deliver mankind from the horrible super-
 stition and slavery of the worship of false gods, to
 pull down this kingdom of the devil, and to demo-
 lish that fabrick which he had been so long a rearing,
 and to beat him out of those strong holds, which he
 thought had been impregnable.

God indeed gave some check to these many ages
 before, and not long after their first appearance, by
 the Jewish religion, which was on purpose introduc-
 ed and confirmed, and established by so many and
 mighty miracles, to preserve and keep alive in the
 world the primitive tradition and belief of the one
 true God; and likewise to be (as it were) some sha-
 dow and rude draught of that more perfect dipensati-
 on of the christian religion, which, by one sacrifice once
 offered, and by one Mediator between God and men,
 was to put an end to the infinite superstitions of the
 heathen worship, and all the bloody and barbarous
 rites of it, and likewise to the idolatry they were
 guilty of, in the worship of their inferior deities,
 whom they looked upon as a middle sort of powers
 between the gods and men, and therefore addressed
 themselves to them, as mediators between the supe-
 rior and heavenly gods, and men here on earth. This
 was

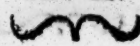
was plainly one of the great designs of the christian S E R M. religion, and therefore it concerns christians to under- XVII. stand it, and to be very careful that they do not suffer themselves to be deluded by any specious pretences whatsoever, to bring these things back again into the christian religion, for the ruin and extirpation whereof, it was purposely designed and intended.

And this seems plainly to be the meaning of that caution, wherewith St. *John* concludes his catholic or general epistle, namely, that christians should be very careful that they were not carried back again into the heathen idolatry, by the confident pretences of the *Gnostick* hereticks to higher degrees of knowledge and illumination than other christians had; that is, by their pretending to be *the infallible church, and the only true and genuine christians*. For it is against this *sect*, that this epistle is plainly designed, which St. *John* thus concludes, chap. 5. from verse the 18th to the end; *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not*; meaning that he doth not commit *the sin unto death*, which he had spoken of just before (*viz.* apostasy from christianity to the heathen idolatry, or that which was very like it) *whosoever is born of God doth not commit this sin, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not*; that is, he preserveth himself from the contagion of idolatry, into which the devil was so busy to seduce mankind. *And we know that we are of God*, that is, do belong to the true God, and are worshippers of him: *And the whole world lieth in wickedness, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ, is in the power, or under the dominion of that wicked one*; that is, the greatest part of mankind was sunk into idolatry, and the worship of the devil. *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true*. *We know*, we christians are better taught by the christian religion, to acknowledge and worship the only true God: *And we are in him that is true, in or by his Son Jesus Christ*; that is, we worship the only

S E R M. true God, by his Son Jesus Christ. And then he concludes, *little children, keep yourselves from idols*; intimating hereby, that the worshipping of any other, besides this only true God, and by any other mediator than Jesus Christ, is *idolatry*.

There were indeed, two very ancient and common notions, both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, of the original whereof it is hard to give any certain account; only this is certain, that they did prevail very early, and did very generally possess mankind: And they were these: *First*, that God was not to be appeased towards sinners, merely upon their repentance, without the death and suffering of some other in their stead; and that God would accept of this vicarious punishment and suffering, instead of the death of the sinner himself. And this seems to have given the original to the sacrifices of living creatures, to appease the wrath of God towards sinners; which, in process of time, as the worship of false gods prevailed in the world, did proceed to that degree of superstition and barbarous inhumanity, that by the instigation of the devil, men offered up the blood of their children, and sacrificed their sons and daughters to their idols and false gods. *Secondly*, another common notion, which had likewise possessed mankind was, that God was not to be immediately approached by sinful men; but that their prayers were to be offered up to the deity by certain mediators and intercessors, that were to procure for them the favour of the gods, and the gracious answer and acceptance of their prayers. And this was the original of that other sort of heathen idolatry, which consisted in the worship of the dæmons and heroes, that is, of Angels and souls departed, *viz.* of such eminent persons as had been great benefactors to mankind, and, for their worthy deeds upon earth, were canonized, and translated into the number of the inferiour gods: By these, as the chief courtiers and favourites of heaven, they addressed

addressed their prayers and supplications to the superior gods.



Now with these notions, which had generally possessed mankind (how imperfect soever) God was pleased to comply so far, as in the frame of the *Jewish* religion (which was designed for a type of the more perfect institution of the christian religion, and a preparation for it :) I say, God was pleased to comply so far with these notions, as to appoint sacrifices to be slain and offered up for the sinner; and likewise *an high-priest, that once a year should enter into the holy of holies, with the blood of sacrifices* that were offered up for the people, to make expiation for them; and in virtue of that blood, *should intercede for the people*, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* does declare at large. And when God *sent his Son in the fulness of time*, he was pleased likewise, in the dispensation of the Gospel, (that perfect institution which was never to be alter'd) to have so much regard to these common notions and apprehensions of mankind, as to provide for the supply of those two great wants, which they seemed always to have laboured under, and concerning which they were at so great a loss, *viz. an effectual expiatory sacrifice for sins upon earth, and a powerful mediator and intercessor with God in heaven*: And both these by the same person, *Jesus Christ, who appeared in the end of the world, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; and in the merit and virtue of that sacrifice, *appearing in heaven in the presence of God for us*, is become a perpetual advocate, and a most powerful intercessor with God in heaven for us. So that instead of the endless sacrifices of the *Jewish* religion, which were ineffectual to the real expiation of sin, and only types and shadows of the true expiatory sacrifice, and instead of the bloody and inhumane sacrifices of the heathen idolatry; the Son of God hath by *one sacrifice for sin once offered, perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and obtained eternal redemption for us*. And instead of the mediation of

SERM. Angels, and the souls of their departed heroes,
 XVII. which the heathen made use of to offer up their prayers to the Gods, we have *one mediator between God and men*, appointed by God himself, *Jesus the Son of God*, who in our nature is ascended into heaven, to *appear in the presence of God for us*. And who so fit to be our patron and advocate, as he who was our sacrifice and propitiation?

Thus the method of our redemption, as it was by the wisdom of God admirably suited to the common apprehensions of mankind; concerning the necessity of a sacrifice to make expiation of sin, and of a mediator to intercede with God for sinners; so was it likewise excellently fitted, not only to put an end to the *Jewish* sacrifices, but likewise to abolish the barbarous sacrifices and rites of the heathen idolatry, and to cashier that infinite number of mediators and intercessors, by whom they addressed their prayers to the deity; and, instead of all this, to introduce a more reasonable and spiritual worship, more agreeable to the nature and perfections of God and the reason of mankind; which was one of the main and principal designs of the christian religion: And therefore to bring in any other mediators, to intercede in heaven for us (whether Angels or saints) and by them to offer up our prayers to God, is directly contrary to the design of the christian religion.

Thirdly, It is likewise evident from the nature and reason of the thing it self, that there is but one mediator and intercessor in heaven, who offers up our prayers to God, and that there can be no more. Because under the Gospel there being but one high-priest, and but one sacrifice once offered for sin; and intercession for sinners being founded in the merit and virtue of the sacrifice, by which expiation for sin is made, there can be no other mediator of intercession, but he who hath made expiation of sin, by a sacrifice offered to God for that purpose; and this *Jesus Christ* only hath done.

done. He is both *our high-priest*, and *our sacrifice*; S E R M. XVII.
and therefore he only, in the merit and virtue of that sacrifice, which he offered upon earth, can *inter-*
cede in heaven for us, and offer up our prayers to God. Others may pray to God for us; as our brethren upon earth do, and perhaps the Angels and saints in heaven; but none of these can offer up our prayers to God, and procure the acceptance of them; for that can only be done in virtue of a sacrifice first offered, and by him that offered it; this being the peculiar office and qualification of a *mediator* or *intercessor*, properly so called.

It is the plain design of the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, to prove that Christ is our *only mediator* in heaven, in virtue of that sacrifice for sin, which he offered upon earth; and that he alone *appears in the presence of God for us*, to present our requests to him, and obtain a gracious answer to them; and he shews at large how this was particularly typify'd by the *Jewish high-priest*, who upon the great day of expiation, after the sacrifice was slain without, *entered alone into the holy of holies, with the blood of the sacrifices*, in virtue whereof he *made intercession for the people*. Answerably to this, *Jesus the high-priest of our profession*, offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, and, in virtue of that sacrifice, *is entered into the high place not made with hands, that is, into heaven it self, there to appear in the presence of God for us, where he lives for ever to make intercession for us*, in virtue of that *eternal redemption which he hath obtained for us*, by the price of his blood, as the Apostle declares in several chapters of that epistle. So that this intercession being founded in the merit of a sacrifice, which he alone offered, he is of necessity *the only mediator between God and men*.

And for this reason it is, that the mediation and intercession of *Christ* is so frequently in scripture mentioned together with the expiation which he made for the sins of men, or (which is the same) with the price

S E R M. price which he paid for the redemption of mankind;
 XVII. because the one is founded in the other, and depends
 upon it. So we find 1 John 2. 1, 2. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* And here likewise in the text, *There is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; therefore the only mediator between God and men, because he only gave himself a ransom for all men.* The efficacy and prevalency of his mediation, being founded in the merit and virtue of the ransom of his blood.

And the force of these texts, and the reasoning from them, is not to be avoided and turned off, by distinguishing between a *mediator of redemption* and of *intercession*, and by saying, that it is true, that Christ is *the only mediator of redemption*, but there may be many *mediators of intercession*: For if the force of his being advocate or intercessor be founded in the virtue of his ransom and propitiation (as I have plainly shewn, to the conviction of any that are not strongly prejudiced, and that will read and consider what the scripture says in this matter without prepossession,) then it is plain, that none can be a proper *mediator of intercession*, but he that paid the price of our redemption: So that *the mediator of our redemption*, and *our mediator of intercession*, must of necessity be one and the same person; and none can appear in the quality of *our advocate with the Father*, but he only who is *the propitiation for the sins of the whole world*.

I should now have proceeded to

The *Fourth* thing I proposed in the handling of this argument, namely, to shew how contrary to this doctrine of the christian religion, concerning *one only mediator and intercessor in heaven for us*, the doctrine and practice of the church of Rome is in this matter; namely, in their invocation of Angels, and the blessed Virgin, and the Saints, and flying to their help,
 and

and making use of their mediation and intercession with God for sinners: As likewise how contrary all this is to the doctrine and practice of the christian church, for several of the first ages of it. And then I should have answered their chief pretences and excuses for these things, and shewed that this practice of theirs is not only needless (being no where commanded by God) but useless also, and unprofitable; and not only so, but very dangerous and impious, being contrary to the christian religion, and highly derogating from the virtue and merit of Christ's sacrifice, and from the honour of *the only mediator between God and men.* But of this another time.

S E R M O N XVIII.

*The Second
Sermon on
this Text,*

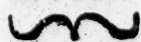
Christ Jesus the only Mediator between
God and Men.

1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between
God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who
gave himself a ransom for all.*

IN these words are *four* propositions: *three* exprest, and the *fourth* implied.

S E R M.
XVIII.



- I. *That there is one God.*
- II. *That there is one mediator between God and men; Jesus Christ.*
- III. *That he gave himself a ransom for all.*
- IV. *That the mediation or intercession of Jesus Christ, is founded in his redemption of mankind: That because*
he

S E R M. *he gave himself a ransom for all men*, therefore he, and
 XVIII. he only, is qualified to intercede for all men, in virtue of that sacrifice which he offered for the salvation of all mankind.

The *Second* of these I spake to the last time, and endeavoured to shew,

1. That God hath appointed *but one mediator*, or advocate or intercessor in heaven for us; by whose mediation we are to offer up all our prayers and services to God.

2. That this doctrine of *one mediator* is most agreeable to the main end and design of the christian religion, and of our Saviour's coming into the world, which was to destroy idolatry.

3. That from the nature and reason of the thing (*viz.* because intercession for sinners is founded in the merit of that sacrifice, by which expiation of sin is made) there can be no other *mediator of intercession*, but he who hath made expiation for sin, by a sacrifice offered to God for that purpose; and this *Jesus Christ* only hath done. Thus far I have gone: I proceed now to

The *Fourth* thing which I proposed in the handling of this argument, namely, to shew how contrary to this doctrine of the christian religion, *concerning one only mediator and intercessor* in heaven for us, the doctrine and the practice of the church of *Rome* is in this matter; namely, in their invocation of Angels, and the blessed Virgin, and the saints, and flying to their help, and making use of their mediation and intercession with God for sinners.

And that I may proceed more distinctly in this argument, I shall handle it under these particular heads.

First, I shall endeavour to shew, that the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome*, in this matter, is contrary to the doctrine of the christian religion, concerning *one only mediator and intercessor* in heaven for us.

Secondly, That it is contrary to the doctrine and practice of the christian church, for several of the first ages of it. S E R M. XVIII.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to answer their chief pretences and excuses, for this doctrine and practice.

Fourthly, To shew that this doctrine and practice of theirs is not only needless, being no where commanded by God, but useless also, and unprofitable.

Fifthly, And not only so, but very dangerous and impious; because contrary to the christian religion, and greatly derogating from the virtue and merit of Christ's sacrifice, and from the honour of *the only mediator between God and men.*

First, I shall endeavour to shew, that the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* in this matter, is contrary to the doctrine of the christian religion concerning *one only mediator and intercessor* in heaven for us; namely in their invocation of Angels, and the blessed Virgin, and the saints, and flying to their help, and making use of their mediation and intercession with God for sinners.

That Jesus Christ is *our only mediator and intercessor* with God in heaven, by whom we have access to God in any action of religious worship, and that all our prayers and services are to be offered up to God only by him, and in his name and mediation, and no other, I have plainly shewed from scripture, and proved it by an invincible argument, taken likewise from scripture; namely, because the efficacy and prevalency of his mediation and intercession is founded in the virtue and merit of his sacrifice; and that he is therefore *the only mediator between God and men, because he only gave himself a ransom for all*; he is therefore *our only advocate with the father, because he only is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world.*

I have shewed likewise, that the scripture excludes Angels from being our mediators with God, from the main scope and design of the epistle to the *Cossians*;

SER M. *lossians*; and much more are the saints departed excluded from this office, being inferior to the Angels, not only in the dignity and excellency of their beings, but very probably in the degree of their knowledge.

In short, prayer is a proper act of religious worship, and therefore peculiar to God alone; and we are commanded *to worship the Lord our God, and to serve him only*: And no where in scripture are we directed to address our prayers and supplications and thanksgivings to any but God *alone*, and only in the name and mediation of *Jesus Christ*. Our blessed Saviour himself hath taught us, to put up all our prayers to God our heavenly Father, Luke 11. 2. *when you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven.* Which plainly shews, to whom all our prayers are to be addressed; and unless we can call an Angel, or the blessed Virgin, or a saint, *Our Father*, we can pray to none of them. And elsewhere he as plainly directs us, by whom we are to apply ourselves to God, and in whose name and mediation we are to put up all our requests to him, John 14. 6. *I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*: And then it follows, ver. 13. 14. *And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorify'd in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* Nothing is clearer in the whole Bible, than *one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus*, and that he is *our only advocate and intercessor* with God in heaven for us.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to shew, that the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* in this matter, is contrary to that of *the christian church*, for several of the first ages of it.

As for the ages of the Apostles, it hath been already proved out of their writings. That it was not practised in the three first ages, we have the acknowledgment of cardinal *Perron*, and others of their learned

learned writers; and they give a very remarkable reason for it; namely, because the worship and invocation of saints and Angels, and addressing our prayers to God by them, might have seemed to have given countenance to the heathen idolatry. From whence I cannot forbear, by the way, to make these two observations. 1. That the invocation of saints and Angels, and the blessed Virgin, and addressing our selves to God by their mediation, was not in those primitive ages esteemed a duty of the christian religion; because, if it had, it could not have been omitted for fear of the scandal consequent upon it: And if it was not a duty then, by what authority or law, can it be made so since? 2. That this practice is very liable to the suspicion of idolatry; and surely every Christian cannot but think it fit, that the church of Christ should, like a chaste spouse, not only be free from the crime, but from all suspicion of idolatry.

And for the next ages after the Apostles, nothing is plainer, than that both their doctrine and practice were contrary to the doctrine and practice of the present church of *Rome* in this matter. The most ancient fathers of the christian church do constantly define prayer, to be *an address to God*; and therefore it cannot be made to any but God only: And after the rise of *Arianism*, they argued for the divinity of Christ, against the *Arians*, from our praying to him; which argument were of no force, if prayers might be made to any but God; and this was in the beginning of the fourth age.

And we no where find any mention of those distinctions, of *Gods by nature*, and *Gods by participation* (as *Bellarmino* calls the Angels and saints) or of a *supreme and inferior religious worship*; or of a *mediator of redemption*, and a *mediator of intercession*; which are so commonly made use of by the church of *Rome* in this controversy.

And,

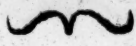
SERM.

XVIII.

And, which is as considerable as any of the rest, the ancient fathers were generally of opinion, that the saints were not admitted to the beatific vision, till after the day of judgment; and this is acknowledged by the most learned of the church of *Rome*. But this very opinion takes away the foundation of praying to saints; because the church of *Rome* grounds it upon their reigning with Christ in heaven, and upon the light and knowledge which is communicated to them in the beatific vision; and if so, then they who believed the saints not yet to be admitted to this vision, could have no reason or ground to pray to them.

And lastly, The ancient church prayed for saints departed, and for the blessed Virgin herself; and therefore could not pray to them, as intercessors for them in heaven, for whom they themselves interceded upon earth. And therefore the church of *Rome*, in compliance with the change which they have made in their doctrine, have changed the *Missal* in that point, and instead of praying for St. *Leo* (one of their popes) as they were wont to do in their ancient *Missal*, in this form, *Grant, O Lord, that this oblation may be profitable to the soul of thy servant Leo*; the *Collect* is now changed in the present *Roman Missal* into this form, *Grant, O Lord, that by the intercession of blessed Leo, this offering may be profitable to us*. And (as the gloss upon the *cannon law* observes) this change was made in their *Missal* upon very good reason; because *anciently they prayed for Leo, but now they pray to him*; which is an ingenuous acknowledgment, that both the doctrine and practice of their church are plainly changed, from what they anciently were in this matter.

What the doctrines and practices of their church of *Rome* are in this matter, all the world sees, and they themselves are so ashamed of them, that of late all their endeavours have been, to represent them otherwise than in truth they are, and to obtrude upon us a *new popery*, which they think themselves better able

to defend than *the old* ; which yet they have not shewn S E R M.
that they are so well able to do ; and therefore now, XVIII.
instead of defending the true doctrines and practices 
of their own church, they would fain mince and disguise them, and change them into something that comes nearer to the *Protestant* doctrine in those points : As if they had no way to defend their own doctrines, but by seeming to desert them, and by bringing them as near to ours as possibly they can.

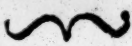
But take them, as they have mollified them and par'd them, to render them more plausible and tenable ; that which still remains of them, I mean *the solemn invocation of saints and Angels, as mediators and intercessors with God in heaven for us*, is plainly contrary both to the doctrine and practice of the primitive ages of christianity.

As for the age of the Apostles, I have already shewn it ; and the matter is as clear for several of the next following ages, as I shall briefly shew, from a few very plain testimonies.

In the next age to the Apostles, we have an epistle of one of the seven churches (I mean the church of *Smyrna*) in which in vindication of themselves from that calumny which was raised against them by the *Jews*, among the heathen, *that if they permitted the Christians to have the body of the martyred Polycarp, they would leave Christ to worship Polycarp* ; I say, in vindication of themselves from this calumny, they declare themselves thus, *Not knowing (say they) that we can neither leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of the world of those that are saved, nor worship any other ; nor (as it is in the old latin translation) nor offer up the supplication of prayer to any other person ; for as for Jesus Christ, we adore him, as being the Son of God ; but as for the Martyrs, we love them, as the disciples and imitators of the Lord.* So that they plainly exclude the saints from any sort of religious worship, of which prayer or invocation was always esteemed a very considerable part.

SERM. Irenæus likewise tells us (l. 2.) That the church doth
 XVIII. nothing (speaking of the miracles which were wrought)
 by the invocation of Angels, nor by enchantment, nor by
 any other wicked arts; but by prayers to the Lord, who
 made all things, and by calling on the name of our Lord
 Jesus Christ. Here all invocation of Angels, and by
 the same or greater reason, of the saints, is excluded.
 And Clemens Alexandrinus delivers it as the doctrine
 of the church; that since there is but one good God,
 therefore both we and the Angels pray to him, both for
 the giving, and the continuance of good things.

In the next age, Origin is so full and expresse in this
 matter, that it is not possible for any protestant to
 speak more positively and clearly, l. 8. cont. Celsus,
 where he does on set purpose declare and vindicate the
 christian doctrine and practice in this matter; We
 worship (says he) the one only God, and his one only
 Son, and Word, and image, with our utmost supplica-
 tions and honours, bringing our prayers to the God of all
 things, through his only begotten Son; and afterwards,
 Away (says he) with Celsus his counsel, that says, we
 must pray to dæmons (or Angels) for we must pray on-
 ly to God who is above all; we must pray to the only
 begotten and first born of every creature, and we must
 beseech him to offer up our prayers which we make to
 him, to his God and our God: And again (speaking
 of Angels) As for the favour of others (if that be to
 be regarded) we know, that thousands of thousands stand
 before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand minister
 unto him; these are our brethren, and friends, who
 when they see us imitating their piety towards God, work
 together to the salvation of those who call upon God, and
 pray as they ought to do, that is, to God only; and (l.
 5) where Celsus urges him with this, That the scrip-
 tures call Angels Gods, he tells him, that the scriptures
 do not call the Angels Gods, with any design to require
 us to worship and adore them instead of God, who are
 ministring spirits, and bring messages and blessings down
 to us from God; for (says he) all supplications and
 prayer,

prayer, and intercession, and giving of thanks, must be SERM.
sent up to God, who is above all, by the high-priest, who XVIII.
is above all Angels, and is the living Word and God. 

And though Angels be only here mentioned, yet by the same reason, all other creatures are excluded, from being the objects of our religious worship and invocation, or, mediators of intercession with God for us ; because all supplication and prayer, and intercession, and thanksgiving, must be sent up to God by our high-priest, who is the living Word and God. Let us then also (as he goes on) make supplication to the Word himself : and intercession, and giving of thanks, and prayer : But to invoke Angels is not reasonable ; since we do not comprehend the knowledge of them, which is above us ; and if we could comprehend the knowledge of them, which is wonderful and secret, this very knowledge, which declares to us their nature and office, would not allow us to presume to pray to any other, but to the God who is Lord over all, and abundantly sufficient for all, by our Saviour the Son of God ; where he gives two plain Reasons, why we ought to pray only to God, and to offer up our prayers only by the mediation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Saviour : *First*, Because he only is Lord over all, and therefore the worship of prayer is to be given to him only. And then, *Secondly*, Because we have no need of any other patron and benefactor, or of any other mediator and advocate, he is abundantly sufficient for all, by our Saviour the Son of God.

In the same age Novatian, in his book concerning the Trinity, makes use of this argument to prove the divinity of Christ ; because he hears our prayers, when we call upon him. If Christ (says he) be only a man, how can he be present every where to those that call upon him ; since this is not the nature of man, but of God, to be able to be present every where ? If Christ be only a man, why do we in our prayers call upon him as mediator ; since prayer to a man is deem'd ineffectual to help or save us ? If Christ be only man, why do

SERM. we put our hope in him ; since hope in man is accursed
XVIII. in scripture ?

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In the IVth century, *Apostolical Constitutions*, under the name of *Clemens Romanus* (but undoubtedly written in that age) give us a pregnant negative testimony in this matter ; for though a great many of the publick prayers are there set down at large, yet they are all directed to God alone, and not the least intimation there of any prayer made to the *Angels* or *saints*, or even to the *Virgin Mary* ; not of their intercession or aid ; which now makes so great a part of the publick devotions of the church of *Rome*.

Atbanasius, in his fourth oration against the *Arians*, proves the unity of the Father and the Son, from 1 *Thes.* 3. 11. Now God himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. From whence he argues thus, One would not pray to receive any thing from the Father and the Angels, or from any other creature ; nor would one say, God and the Angels give thee this ; but one would pray to receive any thing from the Father and the Son, because of their unity and uniform gift ; for all things that are given by the Father, are given by the Son, and there is nothing which the Father doth not work by the Son ; and then concludes, that it doth not belong to any, but to God alone, to bless and grant deliverances. This I take to be a very remarkable testimony against the church of *Rome*, who in their publick offices join the blessed Virgin with God, and our Saviour, in the same breath, and sometimes put her before her Son Let Mary and her Son bless us, as it is in the office of the blessed Virgin ; in direct contradiction to what I just now cited out of *Atbanasius* : and nothing so common in their mouths, as *Jesu Maria* ; *Jesus* and *Mary* ; nothing more frequent in their most eminent writers, than to join them together in their doxologies and thanksgivings, *Glory be to God, and the blessed Virgin, and to Jesus Christ*, says *Gregory de Valencia*. And *Bellarmin* himself concludes his disputations concerning the worship of saints,

saints, in these words, *Praise be to God, and to the blessed Virgin mother Mary ; likewise to Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, be praise and glory.* And in the very *Roman Missal* it self, they make confession of their sins to God Almighty, and the blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Micheal the Archangel, and to all the saints. And in their absolution, they join together the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the merits of the blessed Virgin, and of all the saints, for the remission of sins. And is not this the very thing which *Athanasius* doth severely condemn ?

I have mentioned before the council of *Laodicea*, which about the middle of this century condemns the worship of Angels, and praying to them, as downright idolatry ; And towards the end of this fourth age, and in the beginning of the fifth, when it is pretended that praying to saints did begin (though it was rather by way of apostrophe and rhetorical address, than of formal invocation) there are express testimonies against it of the most eminent fathers of that time. I will instance but in three, *Epiphanius*, St. *Chrysostom*, and St. *Augustine*.

Epiphanius, in his confutation of the heresy of the *Collyridians* (which he calls the heresy of the women, because they first began the worship of the Virgin Mary) declares most expressly against the worship of any creature whatsoever ; *For neither* (says he) *is Elias to be worshipped, though he is reckoned among the living* (meaning that he was taken up into heaven, body and soul) *nor John, nor any other of the saints : And as for the Virgin Mary, he particularly adds, that if God will not have us worship the Angels, how much more would he not have us to worship her that was born of Anna ? And concludes, let Mary be had in honour ; but let the Lord be worshipped.*

St. *Chrysostome*, in a long discourse, persuades men to address their prayers immediately to God, and not as we address ourselves to great men by their officers and favourites ; and tells us, *that there is no need of*

SERM. *such intercessors with God, who is not so ready to grant*
 XVIII. *our petitions, when we entreat him by others, as when*
 we pray to him ourselves.

Lastly, St. Augustine, because the scripture pronounces him accursed, that putteth his trust in man; from thence he argues, that therefore we ought not to ask of any other, but of our Lord God, either the grace to do well, or the reward of it. The contrary to which I am sure is done in several of the publick prayers used in the church of Rome. And, l. 22. de civ. Dei, he expressly tells us, that the names of the martyrs were recited in their prayers at the altar; but they were not invocated by the priest, who did celebrate divine service. And in the third council of Carthage (which was in St. Augustine's time) it is enjoined (can. 33.) that all prayers that were made at the altar, should be directed to the Father. Which how it is observed in the church of Rome, we all know.

To conclude this matter, it cannot be made appear, that there were any prayers to saints in the publick offices of the church, till towards the end of the eighth century. For in the year 754 the invocation of saints was condemned by a council of three hundred thirty-eight bishops at Constantinople, as is acknowledged by the second council of Nice, which first established this superstition, in the year 787; and this very council was condemned seven years after, in a council at Francfort, and declared void, and to be no otherwise esteemed of, than the council of Ariminum.

Thus you see, when this doctrine and practice, so contrary to the doctrine and practice, of a great many of the first ages of the christian church, was first established, namely, at the same time with the worship of images, and when the first foundation of transubstantiation was laid; which as they began at the same time, so they are very fit to go together.

I should now have proceeded to the next thing which I proposed, namely, to answer the chief pretences which are made for this doctrine and practice. But of *that* in the following discourse.

S E R M O N XIX.

*The Third
Sermon on
this Text.*

Christ Jesus the only Mediator between
God and Men.

I Tim. ii. 5, 6.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator between
God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who
gave himself a ransom for all.*

I N the *two* former discourses upon this *text*, I have S E R M.
treated on the *second proposition* I laid down from XIX.
the words; *viz. that there is but one Mediator be-
tween God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* In treat-
ing of this proposition, I shewed,

First, That it is agreeable to scripture.

Secondly, That it is agreeable to one great end and
design of the christian religion, and of our Saviour's
coming into the world, which was to destroy idolatry
out it.

Thirdly, That from the nature and reason of the
thing, there can be but one *mediator* or *intercessor* in
heaven with God for sinners; and that he can be no
other than *Jesus Christ*.

U 4

Fourthly,

SERM. *Fourthly*, I shewed how contrary to this doctrine, XIX. the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* is, in their invocation of Angels and the blessed Virgin, and the saints, and making use of their *mediation* and *intercession* with God for sinners.

This I endeavoured to do, by shewing 1st, How contrary this is to the doctrine of the scriptures. 2^{dly}, How contrary to the doctrine and practice of the church, for several of the first ages of it, And thus far I have gone.

I proceed now, in the 3^d place, to answer the chief pretences and excuses which are made by those of the church of *Rome*, for this doctrine and practice.

As, 1. That they only say, that it is lawful to pray to Angels and saints; but do not enjoin and require it. To this I answer two things.

(1.) In saying that it is lawful to pray to saints and Angels (if they went no farther) they say that which they can never make good; because prayer is an act of religious worship, and peculiar and proper to God only, and therefore cannot be given to any creature, Angel, or saint. This I have proved from scripture, where our Saviour commands us, *when we pray, to say, Our Father which art in heaven*; that is, to direct and address our prayers to God only. And St. Paul likewise forbids *the worshipping Angels*, by invoking of them, and making use of them as *mediators* between God and us, in his epistle to the *Colossians*; which *Theodoret* expressly interprets concerning the invocation of Angels, and applying ourselves to them, as *mediators* and *intercessors* with God in heaven for us. And the council of *Laodicea* declares this practice to be idolatry. Besides, that the ancient fathers of the christian church, for above three hundred years, never spake of praying to any, but God only; and do expressly condemn the invocation of Angels, much more of the saints, who are inferior to them; and therefore they always define *prayer* to be an *address*

dress to God, a conversing and discoursing with God ; S E R M. XIX. which would be a false definition of prayer, if it were lawful to pray to any but to God only. All which considered, one may justly wonder at the confidence of some men, who would have it taken for granted, without any proof, that the invocation of saints and Angels is lawful.

(2.) If it were true, that it is lawful to pray to Angels and saints ; it is not true, that the church of *Rome* does only declare it to be lawful, but does not require and enjoin it, as some of their late writers pretend.

With what face can this be said, when there are so many prayers to Angels and saints, and especially to the blessed Virgin, in *the publick offices* of their church, in which all are supposed to join, as much as in the prayers which are put up to God by the priest ? 'Tis true, indeed, the people understand neither ; but they are present at both, and join in both alike ; that is, as much as men can be said to join in that which they do not understand ; as that church supposeth people may do, and receive great edification also, by joining with the priest, in a service which they do not understand. But how they can be edified by what they do not understand, I must confess myself as little able to understand, as they do their prayers. But whether they understand them or not, 'tis certain that if the people have any part in the publick prayers of the church, they are bound to pray to Angels and saints.

And if the creed of pope *Pius IV*, framed by virtue of an order of the council of *Trent*, be of any authority with them, one of the articles of it is, that *I do firmly hold, that the saints which reign together with Christ, are to be worshipped and invoked, and that they do offer up prayers to God for us.* And this creed all the governors of cathedrals and superior churches, and all who hold any dignity, or benefice, with cure of souls from them, are bound solemnly to make

S E R M. make profession of, and swear to, and carefully to
 XIX. cause it to be held, and taught, and preached by all
 ~~~~~ that are under their charge ; so that they are to teach  
 the people, *that the saints wick reign together with  
 Christ, are to be worshipped and prayed to.* And there-  
 fore unless people are not bound to do that, which  
 they are to be taught it is their duty to do, they are,  
 by virtue of this article, required to *worship and pray  
 to saints.* And if the *publick office* of their church be  
 the *publick worship*, and pope Pius's creed the *publick  
 faith* of the *Romish church*, no man can be either of  
 the faith or in the communion of that church, who  
 does not only hold it lawful, but his duty, to *worship  
 the saints in heaven, and to pray to them*, and accord-  
 ingly does join in the worship of them, and prayers  
 to them, as much as in any other part of divine ser-  
 vice.

2. Another pretence for this doctrine and practice  
 is, that the saints in heaven do pray for us, and  
 what is this but to be *mediators* and *intercessors* with  
 God for us? And if so, why may we not pray to  
 them, to intercede with God for us? To this I an-  
 swer *four* things.

(1.) We do not deny that the saints in heaven  
 pray for us that are here upon earth, because they  
 may do so, for any thing we know ; but that they  
 do so, is more than can be proved, either by clear  
 testimony of scripture, or by any convincing argu-  
 ment from reason, and therefore no doctrine or prac-  
 tice can be safely grounded upon it.

(2.) Tho' it were certain, that the saints in hea-  
 ven do pray for us ; yet they are not *mediators* and  
*intercessors*, properly so called : For all *intercession*  
 strictly and properly so called, is in virtue of a *sa-  
 crifice* offered by him that intercedes ; and therefore  
 he only by whom expiation of sin is made upon  
 earth, can be properly an *intercessor* with God in  
 heaven ; but this, no Angel or saint hath done, nor  
 can do.

And



And (as I have shewed in some of the former discourses) it is the plain scope of a great part of the epistle to the *Hebrews* to prove this very thing, that under the gospel we have an high-priest that lives for ever, and appears in the presence of God for us, in the virtue of that blood which he shed, and that sacrifice which he offered upon the cross for the expiation of sin: And that by this high-priest only we have access, with freedom and confidence, to the throne of grace, and by him do offer up all our prayers and thanksgivings, and all other acts of religious worship to God: And this the apostle shews was typify'd, in an imperfect manner, by the *Jewish high-priest* under the law, who was but one, and none but he only could enter into the holy of holies, with the blood of the sacrifices, that were slain and burnt without, by which blood he made an atonement, and interceded for the people; and though every priest might pray for the people, and the people for one another, which is a kind of intercession; yet that peculiar kind of intercession, which was performed by the high-priest in the holy of holies, in virtue of the sacrifice that was slain without, could not be made, but by the high-priest only. By all which was typify'd our high-priest under the gospel, who only hath made expiation of sin, by the sacrifice of himself, and is enter'd into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, where he lives for ever to make intercession for us, in virtue of that blood which was shed for the expiation of sin, and which can only be presented to God by him that shed it. And this is properly intercession, like that of the high priest under the law for the people of *Israel*; and this kind of intercession can be made by none in heaven for us, but only by the high-priest of our profession, *Jesus the Son of God*, and by none else can we offer up our prayers and services to God; and consequently we cannot address ourselves to any other, Angels or saints, as mediators with God for us.

SERM. (3.) Supposing it certain, that the saints do pray  
 XIX. for us; yet we may not address solemn prayer to  
 them to pray for us, because prayer and solemn invocation is a part of that religious worship which is peculiar to God.

(4.) Supposing it not only certain, that the saints in heaven do pray for us, but likewise that they might be proper *mediators* and *intercessors* with God for us, yet we ought not to pray to them, because they cannot hear us, as I shall have occasion to shew fully by and by.

Another of their pretences or excuses for this practice is, that praying to saints to pray for us, is no more than what we do to good men upon earth, when we desire them to pray for us. So the late *expounder of the catholick faith*, namely the bishop of *Meaux*, tells us, *that they pray to the saints in heaven, in the same order of brotherly society with which we entreat our brethren upon earth to pray for us.*

But that this is not a true representation either of their doctrine or practice in this matter, will appear by these following considerations.

(1.) That they pray to the Angels and saints in heaven with the solemn circumstances of religious worship that they pray to God himself, in the same place, and in the same humble posture, and in the same religious offices and services, in which they pray to God; which surely is never done by any to their *brethren upon earth.*

(2.) That in their prayers and thanksgivings, they join the Angels and the blessed Virgin and the saints together with God and Christ, as if (to use their own phrase) it were *in the same order of brotherly society*, and as if they were all equally the objects of our invocation and praise; of which, in my last discourse, I gave several plain instances; but this also is never done to *our brethren upon earth.*

(3.) That in the creed of pope Pius IV, it is expressly said, *That the saints which reign together with Christ,*

Christ, are to be worshipped and invocated; but this SERM.  
surely they will not allow to be done to our brethren XIX.  
upon earth. And the council of Trent does expressly  
ground the worship and invocation of saints, upon  
their reigning with Christ in heaven; and therefore this  
worship and invocation of saints must necessarily be  
something more, than according to the same order of  
brotherly society, with which we entreat our brethren  
upon earth to pray for us: Otherwise the reason given  
by the council of their reigning with Christ in heaven,  
would be frivolous, if the same thing may be done  
to our brethren upon earth.

(4.) In the publick offices of their church, they  
do not only pray to the saints to pray for them, but  
they direct their prayers and thanksgivings immedi-  
ately to them, for all those blessings and benefits  
which they ask of God, and thank him for. Of  
which innumerable examples might be given out of  
their publick offices; particularly in the office of the  
blessed Virgin, they pray to the Angels thus; deliver  
us, we beseech you, by your command, from all our  
sins.

And the words of the decree of the council of Trent,  
[ad eorum orationes, opem, auxiliumque confugere, to  
flee to their prayers, aid, and help,] unless we will  
make them a mere tautology, must of necessity sig-  
nifie something more than begging of them to pray  
for us. And indeed, those words of their aid and  
help, seem to be added on purpose to give counte-  
nance to those direct prayers which are made to the  
saints, for all spiritual and temporal blessings, and  
which still remain without any change in their pub-  
lick offices; and unless we will understand them con-  
trary to the plain and obvious sense of those prayers,  
they must signifie something more than praying to  
the saints to pray for us.

'Tis true, indeed, that the Catechism which was  
framed by order of the council of Trent, for the ex-  
plaining of their doctrines, makes the difference be-  
tween



SERM. between their prayers to God, and to the saints, to lie  
 XIX. in this, that *we say to God, have mercy on us, or hear*  
 our prayers; but to the saints, pray for us. But I have shewn before, that this is not the constant form of praying to saints, but that frequently they make direct addressees to them for their help and aid. And this the compilers of the *Catechism* were sensible of, and therefore they add, *although it be lawful in another manner to ask of the saints themselves, that they would have mercy on us; because they are very merciful.* And is not God so too? And then where is the difference between their prayers to God, and to the saints? If it neither lie in the *matter* of them, nor in the *form*, nor in the *reason* of them; if we pray to them for the same thing, and in the same form, *have mercy on us*, and our prayers to them be grounded upon the same reason that our prayers to God are, namely, *because they are merciful*; where then is the difference between them;

4. I will mention but one pretence more, which is, that by praying to the saints in heaven, they do not make them Gods; and therefore there can be no suspicion or danger of idolatry in the case.

To this I shall answer *two things*.

(1.) That praying to them in all places, and at all times, and for all sorts of blessings, does suppose them to have the incommunicable perfections of the divine nature imparted to them, or inherent in them, namely his omnipotence, and omniscience, and immense presence; and to whatever being we ascribe these perfections, in so doing we make it God; for prayer to God is no otherwise an acknowledgment of his omnipotence, omniscience, and immense presence, than as we do in all places, and at all times, pray to him for all things; and so they do to the saints, and that not only with vocal but with mental prayer, which *the council of Trent* allows, and in so doing, necessarily supposeth them to know our hearts, directly contrary to the reason which *Solomon* gives,  
 why

why we should put up all our prayers and supplications to God (1 Kings 8. 39.) *for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.* SERM.  
XIX.

(2.) Bellarmine is so sensible of the dint of this argument, that he is forced to acknowledge *the saints which reign with Christ in heaven to be Gods by participation* (that is, a sort of inferior Gods, as the heathen supposed their mediators to be) *and that therefore we may fly to their aid and help, as well as to their intercession and prayers.* And is this also to pray to the saints in heaven, *in the same order of brotherly society, with which we entreat our brethren upon earth to pray for us?* This methinks is great familiarity, to treat Gods by participation, just in the same manner as we do our brethren upon earth. Certainly either Bellarmine hath raised the saints in heaven too high, when he makes them Gods by participation; or the bishop of Meaux hath sunk them too low, when he thinks they are to be treated and addressed to, *in the same rank of brotherly society, with mortal men here upon earth.*

One cannot but think the decree of *the council of Trent* to be very obscure and ambiguous, when it can admit of two so very different explications. If *the infallible judge of controversies* can speak no plainer; I think we had even best stick to *the Bible*, and hear what God says in his Word, and endeavour to understand it as well as we can.

I proceed now to the *fourth* thing which I proposed, namely, to shew that this practice of theirs, of addressing of our selves to Angels and saints, and making use of their mediation, to offer up our prayers and thanksgivings to God, is not only needless, being no where commanded by God; but *useless* also, and unprofitable.

They are so far from pretending, that it is *commanded by God*, that several of their later writers would fain make us believe that it is not *enjoined* by their *councils*; but only declared to be lawful, or at most,

S E R M. most, but recommended as profitable. Nor is there  
 XIX. any example of praying to saints, either in the Old  
 or New Testament; Not in the Old (as they of the church of Rome confess) *because the saints were not then admitted into heaven*; nor in the New, *for fear of scandalizing the Jews, and of making the Gentiles think they proposed new Gods, and new mediators to them, instead of the old*; which are the reasons given by their own writers.

And it is *needless* likewise; because the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is sufficient for us, and more than the intercession of millions of saints and Angels. *He alone is able to save to the utmost all those that come to God by him*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks. Hath not he made a clear and full promise to us, that *whatever we ask in his name, shall be granted us*? And have we any reason to doubt, either of his inclination and good-will, or of his power and interest to do us good? What need then is there to sue for the favour, or to take in the assistance of any other, even of those who are thought to be most powerful, and the chief ministers and favourites in that heavenly court? After such an assurance that my business will be effectually done there, by that great *advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*; why should I apply myself to St. Peter, though he be said to keep the keys of heaven; or to Michael the Archangel, though he be *the chief of the ministring spirits*; or to the blessed Virgin herself, notwithstanding those glorious titles of the *Queen of Heaven*, and the *Mother of Mercy*, which they of the church of Rome are pleased to bestow upon her, and without her consent, and as may reasonably be presumed, against her will.

I will put a case, which may help to render this matter a little more plain and sensible to us, so as every man may be able to judge of it. Suppose a king should constitute his son, *the great master of requests*; with this express declaration and assurance, that all petitions that were address'd to him by his  
 son,



son, should be graciously received and answered; in this case, though every man might use his own discretion, at his own peril, and take what course he pleased, yet I should most certainly prefer all my petitions to the king, in the way which he had so plainly directed, and should trouble never a courtier of them all with my my business; for fear the king should think, that I did either distrust his royal word, or despise his son, by my soliciting the aid and help of every little courtier, after I had put my petition into the hands of this *great master of requests*.

S E R M.  
XIX.

*Epilogue*

And now I will not distrust any of your understandings so far as to make the application. I will only add, that it is an eternal rule of truth, and which never fails in any case, *Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora*, it is in vain to attempt that by more ways and means, which may as well and as effectually be done by one; because this would be perfect loss of time and pains: And therefore they who would send us so far about, as to trouble all the saints and Angels in heaven with our petitions, when they cannot deny but that our *great mediator* is alone sufficient; do seem to me to send us upon a very sleeveless errand; so that if with all their skill in fencing, they could defend this practice from being *unlawful*, yet this one thing is a sufficient objection in reason against it, that it is perfectly *needless*.

Or if we could imagine any *need* of this; all addresses to them must be *vain* and *unprofitable*, if they do not know our wants, and hear our prayers that are put up to them; which St. *Augustin* thought they do not know and hear, *Fatendum est* (saith he *L. De Curâ pro mortuis*) *ne scire quidem mortuos, quid hic agatur*; it must be acknowledged that the dead are ignorant of what is done here. This was his opinion; but we are certain that they cannot know our wants, nor hear our prayers at all times and in all places; unless they can either be present every where, which no finite being can be; or else God be pleased in

S E R M. some supernatural way to communicate to them the  
 XIX. knowledge of our wants, and of the prayers which we  
 put up to them; which we can never know that he  
 does, unless he hath communicated to us, that he is  
 pleased to do so, of which the scripture no where  
 gives us the least intimation.

But because they pretend, that the scripture gives us  
 some hints of this, I shall briefly examine what they  
 say about this matter.

I. That the Angels know our condition here below, because they are said *to rejoice at the conversion of a sinner*; and therefore the saints do likewise know our condition, because *they shall be like the Angels*. But this is not said of them till after the resurrection, when we shall have no occasion to pray to them. Besides, that it may well enough be supposed, that God may reveal both to the Angels and saints in heaven, the conversion of a sinner, because it may contribute to the increase of their joy and happiness: But will it hence follow, that God reveals to them all other circumstances of our condition, our dangers and temptations and troubles, our sins and our sufferings, the knowledge whereof would no ways contribute to the increase of their happiness? And yet in order to their intercession with God for us, their knowledge of these things would be most beneficial to us.

II. Because *the rich man* was concerned in hell for the salvation of his relations on earth, they argue that it is much more probable, that the saints in heaven are concerned for us, and are ready to pray for us, and therefore it is very credible, that some way or other, they have the knowledge of our condition and wants, though we cannot certainly tell, what that particular way is.

To which I answer.

(1.) That it is a known rule amongst all divines, that no certain argument can be drawn from the circumstances of a parable, but only from the main scope and intention of it; nor is it so likely that the wicked

wicked in hell should have any share in *that*, which S E R M.  
 St. Paul tells us, is the great virtue of the saints in XIX.  
 heaven, I mean *charity*; and if they have it not,   
 then no argument can be drawn from it. Some of  
 their commentators think, that this motion of *the*  
*rich man* to *Abraham* concerning his brethren, did  
 not proceed from charity to *them*, but to *himself*;  
 lest his torment and punishment should be increased  
 by their coming to hell, by the means of the ill ex-  
 ample which he had given them when he was upon  
 earth; and the cardinal *Cajetan* thinks that he was  
 concerned for his brethren out of pride and ambition,  
 and because it would be for the honour of his family,  
 to have some of them in that glory (so far above any  
 thing in this world) which he saw *Abraham* and  
*Lazarus* possess'd of. This is a reason, which I con-  
 fess I should not have thought on; and yet perhaps  
 it might be likely enough to enter into the mind of  
 a cardinal. And I cannot but observe by the way,  
 that this petition or request, which *the rich man* in  
 hell made to *Abraham*, is the only instance we meet  
 with in scripture, of any thing like a prayer that was  
 put up to any of the saints in heaven.

Well! But suppose that the *rich man* in hell had  
 this charity for his brethren, and we will easily agree,  
 that the saints in heaven have much more charity,  
 not only for their kindred, but for all men here upon  
 earth; let us now consider the particular way and  
 manner which *the great divines* of the church of *Rome*  
 (I mean the *schoolmen*, who cannot be content to be  
 ignorant of any thing) do assign of the knowledge  
 which the saints in heaven have of the condition and  
 wants of men here below.

They tell us that they know all our prayers and  
 wants in the glass of the deity, or trinity; which me-  
 taphor of *the glass of the deity, or trinity*, if it have any  
 meaning, it must be this, that the saints in heaven  
 beholding the face of God or the divine essence, in  
 which the knowledge of all things is contained, they



SERM. may in that glass see all things that God knows: But  
 XIX. then they spoil all this fine speculation again, by tel-  
 ling us, that this glass does not *necessarily* represent to  
 them all that knowledge which is in the divine mind; but that it is a kind of *voluntary* glass, in which the saints are only permitted to see so much as God pleaseth; but how much that is, they cannot tell us. Which amounts to no more than this, that the saints in heaven know as much of our condition here upon earth, as God is pleased to reveal to them: And if this be all, it is as good a reason why we should pray to good men in the *East* or *West-Indies*, to pray for us and help us, because they also know as much of our necessities, and prayers, as God thinks fit to reveal to them.

But if the saints must have a revelation from God of our prayers, before that they know that we pray to them; then the shortest and surest way both, is to pray to God and not to them; or however (as *Bel-larmine* confesseth) it were very fit to pray to God, before every prayer we make to the saints, that he would be pleased to reveal that prayer to them, that upon this signal and notice given them by God, they may betake themselves to pray to God for us. But unless it were very clear from scripture, that God had appointed this method, it is in reason such a way about, as no man would take that could help it: And it seems to me to as little purpose; for why should not a man think God as ready to grant him all his other requests, without the mediation and intercession of saints, as this one request of *revealing our prayers and wants to them*? And if this way be not thought so convenient, I know but one more, and that is, to pray to the saints to go to God, and beg of him, that he would be pleased to reveal to them our supplications and wants, that they may know what to pray to him for in our behalf; which is just such a wise course, as if a man should write a letter to his friend that cannot read, and in a postscript desire

desire him, that as soon as he hath received it, he would carry it to one that can read, and entreat him to read it to him. So that which way soever we put the case, what course soever we take in this matter, it will be so far from seeming reasonable, that we shall have much ado, and must handle the business very tenderly to hinder it from appearing very ridiculous.

Thus I have examined their chief pretences from scripture, for the countenancing this doctrine and practice, and have shewn how little, or rather nothing at all is there to be found of it; and that alone is reason enough against it, though there were nothing in scripture against it, that there is nothing in scripture for it: But I have already produced clear proof out of the New Testament against it: And because they think the least shew and probability from scripture a good argument on their side, I will offer them a probable argument out of the Old Testament, upon which, though I will lay no absolute stress, yet I believe it would puzzle them, upon their principles, to give a clear answer to it; and it is from 2 Kings 2. 9. where *Elijah* just before he was taken up into heaven, says to *Elisha*, *Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee*; thereby intimating (as one would think) that then was the last opportunity of asking any thing of him: But if *Elijah* had understood the matter right (as the church of *Rome* does now) he should rather have directed him, to have prayed to him, when he was in heaven, where he would have a more powerful interest, and be in a better capacity to do him a kindness. For the reason the church of *Rome* gives, why they did not pray to the saints under the Old Testament (namely, because they were not then admitted into heaven) will not hold in the case of *Elijah*, who was taken up into heaven body and soul, and consequently in as good circumstances to be prayed to, as any of the saints and martyrs that have gone to heaven since.

SERM. I should now have proceeded in the *fifth* and *last*  
 XIX. place, to have shewn, that this practice is not only  
 needles and useles, but very dangerous and impious;  
 because contrary to the christian religion, and greatly  
 derogating from the merit and virtue of Christ's sacri-  
 fice, and from the honour of *the only mediator be-*  
*tween God and men, Christ Jesus.* And indeed how  
 can we apply ourselves to any other mediators and  
 intercessors with God in heaven for us, without a gross  
 and apparent contempt of the *high priest of our pro-*  
*fession, Jesus the Son of God?* As if we either distrust-  
 ed his kindness and affection, or his power and in-  
 terest in heaven, to obtain at God's hand all those  
 blessings which we stand in need of. The apostle to  
 the *Hebrews* tells us expressly, that *he is able to save to*  
*the utmost all those that come to God by him;* that is,  
 who address their prayers and supplications to God  
 in his name and mediation. But if we will chuse  
 other mediators for ourselves, of whom we are not  
 sure that they can either hear or help us, we may  
 fall short of that salvation, which the apostle tells us  
 we are secure of by the mediation of Jesus Christ; *for*  
*he is able, &c.*

But this hath been shewn so abundantly in the for-  
 mer part of this discourse, and is so clearly consequent  
 from the whole, that I shall here conclude my dis-  
 course upon the *second proposition* I laid down from the  
 words of my text, *viz. That there is but one mediator*  
*between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

As to the *third proposition* contained in the text,  
*viz. That this one mediator Jesus Christ, gave himself*  
*a ransom for all,* I have treated on that subject parti-  
 cularly on another \* occasion.

\* A Sermon  
 concerning  
 the Sacrifice  
 and Satisfac-  
 tion of Christ.  
 Printed in  
 the year  
 1693.

And as to the *fourth* and *last proposition, viz.*  
*That the mediation or intercession of Jesus Christ is found-*  
*ed in his redemption of mankind; and because he gave*  
*himself a ransom for all, therefore he and he only is qua-*  
*lified to intercede for all men, in virtue of that sacrifice,*  
*which*



*which he offered for the salvation of mankind; I judge nothing more needful to be added, to what has fallen in concerning that subject, in my handling the second proposition, in this and the two former sermons.*

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## S E R M O N   X X .

The general and effectual Publication  
of the Gospel by the Apostles.

*Preached on  
Ascension  
Day.*

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✕ M A R K xvi. 19, 20.

*So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*

I N these words you have these two great points S E R M .  
of christian doctrine. XX.

I. Our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and exaltation at the right hand of God; *he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

II. The effect or consequence of his ascension and exaltation, which was the general and effectual publication of the gospel; *they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* And both these are very proper for this day; but I shall at this time handle the *latter point*, namely, the effect or consequence of our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and exaltation at the right hand of God; *they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*

S E R M.

XX.



And these words contain two things in them.

I. The general publication of the gospel by the apostles; *they went forth and preached every where.*

II. The reason of the great efficacy and success of it; namely, the divine and miraculous power, which accompanied the preaching of it; *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word with signs following.*

I. The general publication of the gospel by the apostles; *They went forth and preached every where.* And, indeed, the industry of the apostles, and the other disciples, in publishing the gospel, was almost incredible. What pains did they take? What hazards did they run? What difficulties and discouragements did they contend withal in this work? And yet their success was greater than their industry, and beyond all human expectation: As will appear, if we consider these five things.

1. The vast spreading of the gospel in so short a space.

2. The wonderful power and efficacy of it upon the lives and manners of men.

3. The weakness and meanness of the instruments that were employed in this great work.

4. The powerful opposition that was raised against it.

5. The great discouragements to the embracing the profession of it. I shall speak briefly to each of these.

1. The vast spreading of the gospel in so short a space. This is represented Rev. 14. 6. by an Angel flying through the midst of heaven, and preaching the everlasting gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. No sooner was the doctrine of the christian religion published, and made known to the world, but it was readily embraced by great numbers, almost in all places where it came. And, indeed, so it was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, Gen. 49. 10. *That when Shiloh (that is the Messias) should come, to him should the gathering of the people be:* And Isai. 2. 2. *That in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the*

the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, S E R M.  
and that all nations should flow unto it. *Isa. 60. 8.* the XX.  
prophet speaking of men's ready submission to the gos-  
pel, and the great number of those that should come  
in upon the preaching of it, they are said to fly as a  
cloud, and as the doves to the windows.

So quick and strange a progress did this new doctrine and religion make in the world, that in the space of about thirty years after our Saviour's death, it was not only diffused through the greatest part of the Roman empire, but had reached as far as *Parthia* and *India*. In which we see our Saviour's prediction fully verified, that before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the Gospel should be preached in all the world, *Matth. 24. 14.* *This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.* But this is not all; men were not only brought into the profession of the Gospel; but,

2. This doctrine had likewise a wonderful power and efficacy upon the lives and manners of men. The generality of those that entertained the Gospel, were obedient to it in word and deed, as the Apostle tells us, concerning the *Gentiles* that were converted to christianity, *Rom. 15. 18.* Upon the change of their religion, followed also the change of their manners, of their former course of life. They that took upon them the profession of christianity, did thenceforth not walk as other *Gentiles* did, in the lusts of the flesh, and according to the vicious course of the world; but did put off, concerning their former conversation, the old man, which was corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and were renewed in the spirit of their mind, and did put on the new man, which after God was created in righteousness and true holiness. So strange an effect had the Gospel upon the lives of the generality of the professors of it, that I remember *Tertullian*, in his apology to the *Roman* emperor and senate, challengeth them to instance in any one that bore



SERM. bore the title of *Christian*, that was condemned as a  
 XX. thief, or a murderer, or a sacrilegious person, or  
 that was guilty of any of those gross enormities, for  
 which so many *Pagans* were every day made examples of publick justice, and punished and executed among them.

And this certainly was a very admirable and happy effect, which the Gospel had upon men, to work so great and sudden a change in the lives of those who entertained this doctrine, to take them quite off from those vicious practices which they had been brought up in, and accustomed to; to change their spirits, and the temper of their minds; and of lewd and dishonest, to make them sober and just, and *holy in all manner of conversation*; of proud and fierce, contentious and passionate, malicious and revengeful, to make them humble and meek, kind and tender-hearted, peaceable and charitable.

And that the primitive christians were generally good men, and of virtuous lives, is credible, because their religion did teach and oblige them to be such; which, though it be not effectual now, to make all the professors of it such, as it requires they should be; yet it was a very forcible argument then, in the circumstances in which the primitive christians were: For christianity was a hated and persecuted profession: No man could then have any inducement to embrace it, unless he were resolved to practise it, and live according to the rules of it; for it offered men no rewards and advantages in this world; but, on the contrary, threatned men with the greatest temporal inconveniences and sufferings; and it promised no happiness to men in the other world upon any other terms, than of *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and of *living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*.

And besides this consideration, we have the best testimony in the world of their unblameable lives, *viz.* the testimony of their professed enemies, who did

did not persecute them for any personal crimes, which they charged particular persons withal, but only for their religion, acknowledging them otherwise to be very innocent and good people. Particularly *Pliny*, in his letter to *Trajan* the emperor (who had given him in charge, to make particular enquiry concerning the Christians) gives this honourable report of them, *That there was no fault to be found in them, besides their obstinate refusal to sacrifice to the Gods; that at their religious meetings it was an essential part of their worship to oblige themselves by a solemn sacrament, against murder, and theft, and adultery, and all manner of wickedness and vice.* No christian historian could have given a better character of them than this heathen writer does. But,

3. The success of the Gospel will appear yet more strange, if we consider the *weakness* and *meanness* of the instruments that were employed in this great work. A company of plain and illiterate men, most of them destitute of the advantages of education, went forth upon this great design, weak and unarmed, unassisted by any worldly interest, having no secular force and power on their side, to give countenance and authority to them; and this not only at their first setting out, but they remained under these disadvantages for three ages together.

The first publishers of the christian religion offered violence to no man; did not go about to compel any by force to entertain the doctrine which they preached, and to lift themselves of their number: They were not attended with legions of armed men, to dispose men for the reception of their doctrine, by plunder and free-quarter, by violence and tortures: This modern method of conversion was not then thought of; nor did they go about to attempt and allure men to their way, by the promises of temporal rewards, and by the hopes of riches and honours; nor did they use any artificial insinuations of wit and eloquence to gain upon the minds of men,  
and

S E R M. and steal their doctrines into them ; but delivered  
 XX. themselves with the greatest plainness and simplicity ;  
 and without any studied ornaments of speech, or  
 fine arts of persuasion, declared plainly to them the  
 doctrine and miracles, the life, and death, and re-  
 surrection of *Jesus Christ*, promising life and im-  
 mortality to them that did believe and obey his doc-  
 trine, and threatening eternal woe and misery in a-  
 nother world to the despisers of it.

And yet these contemptible instruments, notwith-  
 standing all these disadvantages, did their work ef-  
 fectually, and, by the power of God going along  
 with them, gained numbers every day to their re-  
 ligion, and in a short space *drew the world after them*.

Nor did they only win over the common people,  
 but also several persons considerable for their dignity,  
 and eminent for their learning, who afterwards be-  
 came zealous assertors of christianity, and were not  
 ashamed to be instructed in the saving knowledge of  
 the Gospel, by such mean and unlearned persons as  
 the Apostles were, for they saw something in them  
 more divine, and which carried with it a greater  
 power and persuasion than human learning and elo-  
 quence.

4. We will consider the *mighty opposition* that was  
 raised against the Gospel. At its first appearance it  
 could not be otherwise, but that it must meet with  
 a great deal of difficulty and opposition, from the lusts  
 and vices of men, which it did so plainly and so se-  
 verely declare against, and likewise from the prejudi-  
 ces of men that had been brought up in a contrary  
 religion ; no prejudice being so strong as that which  
 is founded in education ; and of all the prejudices of  
 education, none so obstinate and so hard to be remov-  
 ed, as those about religion, yea, though they be  
 never so absurd and unreasonable : *Hath a nation*  
*changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods ?* Men are  
 very hardly brought off from the religion which they  
 have been brought up in, how little ground and rea-  
 son



son soever there be for it ; the being trained up in it, S E R M.  
and having a reverence for it implanted in them in XX.  
their tender years, supplies all other defects.

Had men been free and indifferent in religion, when christianity first appeared in the world, and had they not had their minds prepossessed with other apprehensions of God and religion, and been inured to rites and superstitions of a quite different nature from the christian religion ; or had they at that time been weary of the superstitions of their idolatrous worship, and been enquiring after a better way of religion ; then indeed, the christian religion had appeared with great advantage, and would in all probability have been entertained with a readiness of mind proportionable to the reasonableness of it. But this was not the case : When the doctrine of the Gospel was first published in the world, the whole world, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were violently prejudiced against it, and fixed in their several religions.

The *Jews* indeed in former times had been very prone to relinquish the worship of the true God, and to fall into the heathen idolatry : But after God had punished them severely for that sin, by a long captivity, they continued ever after, very strict and firm to the worship of the true God ; and never were they more tenacious of their religion and law, than at that very time when our Saviour appeared in the world : And though *he* was foretold in their law, and most particularly described, in the authentic books of their religion, the prophets of the Old Testament ; yet by reason of certain groundless traditions, which they had received from the interpreters of their law, that their *Messias* was to be a great temporal prince, they conceived an invincible prejudice against our Saviour, upon account of the mean circumstances in which he appeared ; and upon this prejudice they rejected him, and put him to death, and persecuted his followers : And though their religion was much nearer to the christian, than any of the heathen idolatries ; yet upon this account,

S E R M. count of our Saviour's mean appearance, they were  
 XX. much more averſe to the entertainment of it, than  
 the groſſeſt idolaters among the nations.

Not but that *their* prejudice alſo was very great; the common people being ſtrongly addicted to the idolatry and ſuperſtitious of their ſeveral countries; and the wiſer, and more learned (whom they called *philophers*) were ſo puffed up with a conceit of their own knowledge and eloquence, that they deſpiſed the rudeneſs and ſimplicity of the Apoſtles, and looked upon their doctrine of a *crucified Saviour*, as ridiculous, and the ſtory of *his reſurrection from the dead*, as abſurd and impoſſible. So St. Paul tells us, *that the croſs of Chriſt was to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.*

But beſides the *oppoſition* which the goſpel met withal, from the luſts and prejudices of men, the powers of the world did likewiſe ſtrongly combine againſt it. Among the *Jews*, the chief-prieſts and rulers did, with all their force and malice, endeavour to ſtifle it in the birth, and to ſuppreſs it in its firſt riſe; and ſeveral of the *Roman* emperors, who were then the great governors of the world, engaged all their authority, and their whole ſtrength, for the extirpation of it, and raiſed ſuch a ſtorm of perſecution againſt it, as ſwept away greater numbers of mankind than any famine, or plague, or war that ever was in the *Roman* empire: And yet this religion bore up againſt all this *oppoſition*, and made its way through all the reſiſtance, that the luſts and prejudices of men, armed with the power and authority of the whole world, could make againſt it. And this brings me to the

5. And laſt conſideration I mentioned, *the great diſcouragement* that was given to the entrance of this religion.

There was nothing left to invite and engage men to it, but the conſideration of *another world*; for all the evils of *this world* threatned every one that took  
 the

the profession of christianity upon him. Whoever was known to be a christian, was liable to reproach and ruin, to cruel mockings and scourgings, to banishment, or imprisonment and confiscation of estate; but these were slight and tolerable evils, in comparison of others that were commonly inflicted upon them; they were condemned to the mines, and to the lions, and all imaginable cruelties were exercised upon them; the most exquisite torments that could be devised, and death in all its fearful shapes was presented to them, to deter men from embracing this religion, and to tempt them to quit it: And yet they persisted in the profession of their religion, and for the sake of it, did not only *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, but the most barbarous usage of their *persons*; and demeaned themselves not only with patience and courage, but in exultation and triumph, under those tortures which no man can hear or read of, without horror: And they did not only bear up thus manfully, for one brunt; but when these violent persecutions were renewed and repeated upon them, christianity supported itself under all these daunting discouragements for almost three hundred years, and held out, till the very malice of their persecutors was out of breath, and their cruelty had tired itself.

Nay it did not only *support itself*, under all these *oppositions*, but *grew and prospered*, and *the blood of martyrs became the seed of the church*, and christians sprang up faster, than any persecution could mow them down: For men by degrees became curious to enquire into the cause of such sufferings, and the reason of so much constancy and patience under them; and upon enquiry were satisfied, and became christians themselves; and many times their very persecutors, were ready to sacrifice their lives the next day, for that very cause for which but the day before, they had put others to death.

And it cannot here be reasonably objected, that christians yielded up themselves to all these sufferings, upon



SERMON. upon the same account that some *brave spirits* among the heathen, laid down their lives for their country; XX. namely, out of a desire of fame, and to perpetuate their names in after-ages; this, I say, cannot reasonably be said in this case; because these sufferers were not the great ambitious spirits, the flower and select part of mankind, but the common people, and many of them of the tenderer sex and age, who have usually a greater sense of pain than of glory; and yet so were they animated by their religion, and transported beyond themselves, as not only to submit, but many times to offer themselves to those sufferings, by declaring themselves to be christians, when no man accused them, and when they knew they should die, for making that profession; so that it is harder to justify their forwardness to suffer, than the sincerity of their sufferings. Besides that nothing could be more foolish, and unreasonable, than for men to hope to get a name by suffering in a crowd, and to be particularly remembred to posterity, when they died in such multitudes, that no man knew the names of the greatest part of the sufferers.

You see then how strongly the gospel prevailed, how soon this new religion over-ran the world, how suddenly it subdued the spirits, and changed the manners of men; and by what *mean* and *despicable* instruments, to all human appearance, this *great* work was done; and how in despite of all opposition and discouragements, it was carried on. Can any one of the false religions of the world pretend to have been propagated and established in such a manner, merely by their own force, and the evidence and power of truth upon the minds of men; and to have born up and sustained themselves so long under such fierce assaults, as christianity hath done?

As for the religion of *Mahomet*, it is famously known to have been planted by force at first, and to have been maintained in the world, by the same violent means. So that great *imposter* openly declares, *that*

that he came not to plant his religion by miracles, but S E R M.  
the sword. XX.

And as for the idolatries of *the heathen*, they came in upon the world by insensible degrees, and did not oppose the corruptions of men, but grew out of them; and being suited to the vicious temper and disposition of mankind, they easily gained upon their ignorance and superstition, by custom and example. They were just such a corruption of *natural religion*, in such times of darkness and ignorance, and by such insensible steps, as there hath been since, of the *christian religion* in some parts of the world, which we all know. But no sooner did the light of the gospel shine out upon the world, but the idolatry and superstition of the heathen fell before it, like *Dagon before the ark of God*; and tho' it had the power of the world, and countenance of authority on its side, yet it was not able to maintain its ground; and no sooner was that prop taken away, which was the only support of it, but it presently sunk and vanished; it was not driven out of the world by violence and persecution, but upon the breaking in of so great a light, it silently withdrew, as being ashamed of itself: And when afterwards the emperor *Julian* endeavoured to retrieve it, by his wit and authority, and used all imaginable arts and stratagems, to suppress and extinguish christianity, he was able to effect neither; for the *christian religion* kept its ground, and *paganism*, after it had made a little blaze, died with him.

Now to what cause shall we ascribe this wonderful success and prevalency of the gospel in the world; there can but these two be imagined; the *excellency* of the christian religion, and the *power and presence of the divine spirit* accompanying it.

1. The *excellence* of the christian religion, which both in respect of the goodness of its precepts, and the assurance of its rewards, hath plainly the advantage of any religion, that ever yet appeared in the world. And this is a great advantage indeed: But

S E R M.  
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by this alone it could never have been able to have broken through all that mighty *opposition* and *resistance*, which was made against it; and therefore that it might be able to encounter this with success,

2. God was pleased to accompany the first preaching of it, with a mighty and sensible *presence* and *power of his spirit*. And this brings me to the

*Second part of the text, the reason of the wonderful efficacy and success, which the apostles had in the preaching of the gospel; the Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word with signs following.* Which words express to us that miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, which accompanied the first preaching of the gospel; by which I do not intend to exclude *the inward operation* of God's Holy Spirit upon the minds of men, secretly moving and inclining those to whom the gospel was preached, to embrace and entertain it; which the scripture elsewhere speaks frequently of, and may possibly be intended in the *first* of these expressions, *the Lord working with them*; and *the latter* may only be meant of *the miraculous gifts* of the spirit, with regard to which, God is said to *confirm the word with signs following*, or *accompanying it*. But I rather think they are *both* intended to express the same thing, and that *the latter* is only added by way of explication of *the former*, to shew more particularly, how the Lord wrought with them; namely by giving confirmation to their doctrine, by those miraculous gifts and powers of the spirit, which they were endowed withal, *the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*; that is, with those miracles, which accompanied the first preaching of the gospel. For these words do plainly refer to the promise of the spirit at the 17th verse; *and these signs shall follow them that believe*; which is the reason why they are here called *signs following*; that is, miracles which accompanied the word that was preached.

And



And that this is the full meaning of this *text*, will appear by comparing it with one or two more, *Rom. 15. 18, 19.* where St. Paul speaking of the things which Christ had wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient to the Gospel, he says, *they were done through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the spirit of God; which is the same with that which is said here in the text, of the Lord's working with the Apostles, and confirming the words with signs following.* So likewise *Heb. 2. 3, 4.* the Apostle there tells us, that the Gospel which was first spoken by the Lord, was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. So that the great confirmation, which is said here to be given to the Gospel, was by the miraculous gifts of the spirit, which were poured forth upon the Apostles and primitive Christians.

In speaking of which I shall briefly do these two things.

I. Give an account of the *nature* of these gifts, and of the *use* and *end* to which they served: And then shew in the

II. Place, how the Gospel was confirmed by them.

I. For the *nature* of these gifts, and the *use* and *end* to which they were designed.

They are those miraculous powers which by the descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the day of *Pentecost*, the Apostles were endowed withal, to qualify them to publish the Gospel with more speed and success. Such was the gift of *speaking divers languages*, and the gift of *interpreting* things spoken in divers languages; (and these two gifts were not necessarily united in the same person, for the Apostle tells us, that some had the one, and some the other;) the gift of *prophecy* and *foretelling things to come*, which was always a sign of a person divinely inspired; the miraculous powers of *healing diseases*, of *raising the dead*, and of *casting out devils*, a power of *inflicting corporal diseases*, and *punishments*,

SERM. *ments*, upon scandalous and obstinate Christians, who  
 XX. would not submit to the Apostles authority and go-  
 vernment; which is in scripture called, *a delivering*  
*up to satan, for the destruction*, or tormenting of the  
*body, that the soul may be saved*; nay, in some cases,  
 this power extended to *the inflicting of death itself*, as  
 in the case of *Ananias and Sapphira*.

Not that all these miraculous powers were given to every one of the Apostles, or that they could exercise them at all times; some were bestowed upon one, and some upon another, according to God's good pleasure, and as was most expedient for the *use* and *benefit* of the church, and most subservient to those *ends* for which God gave them; only we find that all the Apostles had the gift of *tongues*; and that the power of *casting out devils, in the name of Christ*, was common to every Christian, and continued in the church for a long time after the other gifts were ceased; as *Tertul. Arnob.* and *Min. Felix* do testify, even of their own times.

But II. I shall briefly shew how the Gospel was *confirmed* by these miraculous gifts.

Now besides the particular *uses* and *ends* of those miraculous gifts (as *the gift of tongues*, did evidently serve for the more speedy planting and propagating of the christian religion in the world; and the power of *inflicting corporal punishments*, in a miraculous manner, upon scandalous and disobedient Christians, did maintain the power and authority of the Apostles, and was instead of an ordinary magistratical power, which Christians were destitute of, whilst the *Roman empire* continued heathen:) I say, besides the particular *ends* and *uses* of all these miraculous gifts, they did all in general, as they were *miracles*, serve for the *confirmation* of the Gospel.

The Apostles delivered the doctrine of Christ, and were *witnesses* of his resurrection from the dead, as *the great miracle*, whereby his doctrine was confirmed; now there was all the reason in the world to believe  
*them,*

them, to whom God was pleased to give such a testimony from heaven; for who could make any doubt of the truth of *their* testimony, concerning the resurrection of Christ, who were enabled to raise others from the dead, and by many other wonderful things which they did, gave such clear testimony, that God was with them?

S E R M.

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Never had any religion fewer worldly advantages to recommend it, and so little temporal countenance and assistance to carry it on; but what it wanted from men, it had from God; for *he gave witness to it with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.* God seems on purpose to have stript it of all secular advantages, that the christian religion might be perfectly free from all suspicion of worldly interest and design, and that it might not owe its establishment in the world, to the wisdom and contrivance of men, but to the arm and power of God.

The inferences I shall at present make from this discourse shall be these.

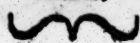
I. To give us satisfaction of the truth and divinity of the doctrine of the christian religion, which hath had so eminent a confirmation given to it from heaven, and did at its first setting out so strangely prevail in the world, against all human probability; *not by might, nor by power; but by the spirit of the Lord.*

No man can well suppose a religion in circumstances of greater disadvantage, and upon all human accounts, more unlikely to sustain and bear up it self than the christian religion was. The first appearance of it was so mean, and its beginnings so small, that no man but would have thought it would presently have come to nothing; and no other account can be given of the strange success and prevalency of it, but that *it was of God, and therefore it could not be overthrown.*

II. This discourse may likewise satisfy us of the reason why this miraculous power, which accompanied the Gospel at first, is now ceased; because



S E R M. there is not the like reason and necessity for it, which  
XX. there was at first.



It was highly necessary *then*, to introduce the christian religion into the world, and to be a sensible evidence to men of the divinity of that new doctrine which was preached to them: But *now* that the Gospel is generally entertained, there is not the same reason why this miraculous power should still be continued. *Acquisito fine, cessant media ad finem*, when the end is once obtained, the means cease; and the wise God, who is never wanting in what is *necessary*, does not use to be lavish in that which is *superfluous*. Now that the christian religion hath got firm footing in the world, God leaves it to be propagated and advanced, by its own rational force, upon the minds of men: Now that the prejudices of education in a contrary religion are removed, and the powers of the world are reconciled to christianity; there is no need of such violent and extraordinary means for the continuance of it, now that it stands upon equal advantages with other religions; God hath left it to be carried on, in more human and ordinary ways, and such as are more level and accommodate to the nature of man.

That miracles are long since ceased, is acknowledged by the fathers, who lived an age or two after the ceasing of them; particularly by St. *Chrysostome*, who gives the same reason for it, which I have just now assigned. But the church of *Rome* would still bear us in hand, that this miraculous power does still continue in *their* church, and, according to *Bellarmino*, must always continue; because he makes it an *inseparable property and mark of the true church*.

But *we* pretend to no such power, nor have we any reason so to do; because all the doctrines of *our* religion, are the ancient doctrines of christianity, delivered by our Saviour, and by his Apostles published to the world; and these are sufficiently confirmed already, by the miracles which our Saviour and his  
Apostles

Apostles wrought in the primitive times of christianity. But the church of *Rome* hath great occasion and need of *new* miracles, to confirm their *new* doctrines; and therefore as they have reason, they usually apply them to the confirmation of their *new* doctrines; some to confirm *purgatory*, and to give countenance to *indulgences*; others to encourage *the worship of the blessed Virgin, and the saints*; others to confirm that which all the miracles in the world are not sufficient to confirm, I mean the doctrine of *transubstantiation*; which, because it overthrows the certainty of *sense*, is in the nature of it peculiarly incapable of being confirmed by a *miracle*.

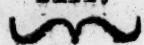
III. And *lastly*, The consideration of what has been said, does justly upbraid us, that this religion, which was so powerful at first, and hath such characters of divinity upon it, coming down to us confirmed by so many miracles, should yet have so little effect upon most of us who call our selves Christians.

*We* have all the advantages of the christian religion, having been educated and brought up in it; and yet it hath less effect upon *us*, than it had upon *those* whose minds were prejudiced, and whose manners were depraved, by the principles of a false religion: For *those* who were reduced from paganism to christianity, did on the sudden become better men, and were more holy and virtuous in their lives, than the greatest part of *us*, who have been instructed and trained up all our lives in the doctrine of christianity.

The true reason of which is, that many of *us* are *Christians* upon the same account that *they* were at first *heathens*; because it was the religion of their country, and they were born and bred up in it. But christianity was the religion of their choice, and there were no motives to persuade them to the profession of that religion, but what were as powerful to oblige them to the practice of it. Let *us* also be Christians, not only

S E R M. by *custom*, but by *choice* ; and then we shall live according to our religion.

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He that takes up a religion for any other reason than to obey and practise it, does not *chuse* a religion, but only counterfeits the choice of it. We have, beyond comparison, the best and most reasonable religion in the world ; a religion that hath the greatest evidence of its truth, that contains the best precepts, and gives men the greatest assurance of a future happiness, and directs them to the surest way of attaining it. Now the better our religion is, the worse are *we*, if we be not made good by it. The philosophy of the heathen made some virtuous : and there were many eminent saints under the imperfection of the *Jewish* institution. What degrees then of holiness and virtue may be expected from *us*, upon whom the glorious light of the Gospel shineth so brightly !

I will conclude all, with the words of the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward : How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him : God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?*



## S E R M O N XXI.

*Preach'd on  
the Feast of  
St. Michael.*

The Nature, Office, and Employment of Good Angels.

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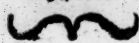
H E B. I. 14.

*Are they not all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

**T**HIS is spoken of good Angels, whose *existence*, as well as that of evil spirits, the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament do every where take for granted, no less than they do *the being of God*, and *the immortality of the soul*. And well they may, since they are all founded upon the general consent of all ages, derived down to us from the first spring and original of mankind; of which general consent and tradition, it is one of the hardest things in the world to assign any good reason, if the things themselves were not true. Therefore I shall not go about to force my way into this argument concerning *the existence of spirits, and beings distinct from matter*, by dint of dispute, (which perhaps would neither be so proper, nor so profitable for this assembly) but shall take the thing as I find it received by a general consent of mankind. And so the books of divine revelation do; nor was there reason to proceed in any other method, than to suppose these things, and take them for granted, as generally assented to by mankind,

S E R M.

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mankind, without either asserting them for new discoveries, or attempting to prove what was so universally believed. The scriptures indeed have more particularly declared *the nature* of these spirits, as also their *order* and *employment*; as in the words which I have read to you, where *the office* and *employment* of good Angels is more particularly discovered; *Are not they all* (says the text) *ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

The author of this epistle to the *Hebrews* having had occasion, in comparing the *two dispensations* of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, to speak of the *Angels*, by whose ministry the law was given, did not think fit to entertain those to whom he wrote, with any nice and curious speculations (for school divinity was not then in fashion) about the *nature* and *order* of Angels; but tells us, what it concerns us more to know, namely, what their *office* and *employment* is in regard to us. Concerning this *nature*, he only tells us, that they are *spirits*; as to their *office* and *employment*, he says in general, that they are *ministring spirits*, that is, that they stand before God to attend upon him, ready to receive his commands, and to execute his pleasure; more particularly, that they are upon occasion appointed and sent forth by God *to minister* on the behalf, and to do good offices *for them that shall be heirs of salvation*. Which last words are a description of pious and good men, such as had sincerely embraced the christian religion, and were thereby become the children of God, and *heirs of eternal salvation*. So that these words are a brief summary of the *doctrine* of good Angels, and of what the scripture has thought fit to reveal to us concerning them: Which may be referred to these *three* heads.

*First*, Their nature; *Are they not spirits?*

*Secondly*, Their general office and employment; *Are they not ministring spirits?*

*Thirdly*, Their special office and employment, in regard to good men; *they are sent forth to minister for them*

them (that is, in their behalf, and for their benefit) **S E R M.**  
 who shall be heirs of salvation. **XXI.**

And this is as much as is necessary for us to know concerning them ; and all this is very agreeable to the general apprehension of mankind ; but the scripture hath very much cleared and confirmed to us, that which was more obscure and less certain before. I shall briefly explain and illustrate these *three* heads, and then draw some useful inferences from the whole.

*First*, For their *nature*, they are *spirits*. This is universally agreed by all that acknowledge such an order of beings, that they *are spirits* : But whether they are pure spirits, divested of matter, and all kind of corporeal *vehicle* (as the philosophers term it) hath been a great controversy, but I think of no great moment and consequence. Not only the ancient philosophers, but some of the ancient christian fathers, did believe Angels to be cloathed with some kind of bodies, consisting of the purest and finest matter ; which they call *Æthereal*. And this opinion seems to be grounded upon a pious belief, that it is the peculiar excellency and prerogative of the divine nature, to be a pure and simple spirit, wholly separate from matter : But the more current opinion of the christian church (especially of latter times) hath been, that Angels are mere and pure spirits, without any thing that is material and corporeal belonging to them ; but yet so, that they have power to assume thin and airy bodies, and can when they please appear in human shape, as they are frequently in scripture said to have done. And this seems most agreeable to the scripture account of them ; though I think it is no *necessary article of faith*, either to believe that they are cloathed with some kind of bodies, or that they are wholly divested of matter.

But however this be, they are described in scripture to be endowed with great excellencies and perfections ; they are said to *excel in strength*, *Psal. 103. 20.* and in *knowledge and wisdom*. Hence are those expressions



S E R M. expressions of being as an *Angel of God*, to discern good  
 XXI. and bad, 2 Sam. 14. 17. *Wise, according to the wisdom of an Angel*, ver. 20. To be of great activity and *swiftness* in their motions; hence it is that they are represented in scripture, as *full of wings*: And to excel in *purity* and *holiness*; hence is that title given them in scripture, of *the holy Angels*. This is the sum of what the scripture hath in several places delivered to us, concerning the *nature* and *properties* of good *Angels*; and beyond this, all our knowledge of them is mere conjecture and uncertainty; and the nice speculations concerning them, idle and wanton curiosities. Indeed the scripture gives sufficient intimation of several *ranks* and *orders* among them, by calling *Michael* an *Archangel*, and *chief prince*, and by distinguishing them by the names of *principalities*, and *powers*, and *thrones*, and *dominions*: But what the difference of these names imports, though some have attempted to explain, yet I do not find that they have discovered any thing to us, besides their own ignorance and arrogance, in pretending to be *wise above what is written*; intruding into those things which they have not seen, being vainly puffed up in their *fleshy minds*; as the Apostle censures some in his time.

Secondly, We have here their *general office and employment*; they are *ministring spirits*; they are (as I may say) domestick servants, and constant attendants upon that great and glorious King, *whose throne is in the heavens*, and *whose kingdom ruleth over all*; they stand continually before him, to behold his face, expecting his commands, and in a constant readiness to do his will. For though the omnipotence of God, and his perfect power of acting be such, that he can do all things immediately by himself, *whatever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth*; can govern the world, and steer the affairs of it, and turn them which way he thinks best, by the least nod and beck of his will, without any instruments or ministers of his pleasure; yet his wisdom and goodness has thought fit to honour his

his creatures, especially this higher and more perfect S E R M.  
rank of beings, with his commands; and to make XXI.  
them according to their several degrees and capacities  
the ordinary ministers of his affairs, in the rule and  
government of this inferior world; and this not for  
his own ease (for to infinite power nothing can be dif-  
ficult or troublesome) but for their happiness; and he  
therefore employs them in his work and service, that  
they may be capable of his favour and rewards.

And that the Angels of God are the great ministers  
of his providence here in the world, hath not only  
been the constant tradition of all ages; but is very  
frequently and plainly asserted in scripture. In the  
Old Testament we often read that God employed his  
Angels to be the messengers of his will and pleasure  
to men; and to carry good tidings and comfortable  
news to them upon several occasions: As to *Abra-  
ham*, to foretel the miraculous birth of his son *Isaac*;  
and afterwards to rescue him from being sacrificed:  
To *Jacob*, when he was so afraid of his brother  
*Esau*: To *Manoah* and his wife, to foretel the birth  
of *Sampson*, the great deliverer of *Israel* from the  
*Philistines*: And upon that great occasion of bring-  
ing the people of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and conduct-  
ing them through the wilderness, he sent a great and  
mighty Angel (called *the Angel of his presence*) to go  
before them, and guide them in their way: And the  
Apostle tells us, that *the law was delivered to them  
upon mount Sinai by the disposition of Angels*.

On the other hand, God frequently made them the  
messengers of his wrath, and instruments of his ven-  
geance. Thus he sent them to foretel, and to exe-  
cute that terrible destruction upon *Sodom* and *Gomor-  
rah*. And he sent a destroying Angel to brandish  
his sword in a visible manner over *Jerusalem*, and to  
smite them with the pestilence, for *David's* sin in  
numbering the people. And by the ministry of an  
Angel he slew in the camp of the *Assyrians* in one  
night,

SERM. night, an hundred and eighty five thousand. And,  
 XXI. *Acts* 12. 23. it is said, that *the Angel of the Lord*  
 smote Herod, for receiving the blasphemous acclama-  
 tions of the people.

Nay, the Angels shall be the instruments and executioners of God's vengeance upon the wicked at the judgment of the great day. So the judge himself tells us, *Matth.* 13. 49, 50. *So shall it be at the end of the world; the Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

And that particular Angels do preside over empires and kingdoms, and sway the weighty affairs of them; and by a secret and invisible hand manage and bring about great changes and revolutions, both *Jews* and *Christians* have collected with great probability and consent from *Daniel* 10. where there is mention made of *the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstanding the Angel that was sent to Daniel*, and of *Michael a chief prince assisting him*. And of this ministry of Angels, in the government of kingdoms, *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks, as of a thing out of all controversy. I proceed to the

*Third* thing, which I principally intended, and seems to be chiefly designed in the text; and this is *the special office and employment* of good Angels, in regard to good men; and for this the Apostle expressly tells us, that *they are sent forth to minister for them* that is, in their behalf, and for their benefit) *who shall be heirs of salvation*. In which words there are *three* things very considerable for our instruction and comfort.

1. Their particular *designation* and *appointment* for this employment, expressed in these words, *sent forth*, *ἀποσταλμένοι*, as if they were particularly commissioned and appointed by God for this very end. God himself doth superintend all affairs, and by his particular  
 designation



designation and command, the Angels do fulfil his word, and execute the pleasure of his good-will, towards us. Hence is it so frequently said in scripture, that God sent his Angel to such or such a person for such or such purposes. S E R M.  
XXI.

2. You have here the *general end* of their employment; for good men; they are sent forth on our behalf, and for our benefit; to take care of us and protect us, to succour and comfort, to direct and assist, to rescue and deliver us.

3. Here is the *more special end* of their employment, in regard to good men, intended in those words; for them who shall be heirs of salvation; hereby signifying, that the Angels are employed about good men, with regard more particularly to their eternal happiness, and for the conducting and furthering of the great affair of their everlasting salvation. This certainly is our greatest concernment; and therefore they have a more particular charge and care of us in regard to this.

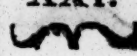
It was a common opinion among the *heathen*, and a constant and firmly believed tradition among the *Jews* (the *Sadducees* only excepted, who did not believe there were Angels or spirits) that every man (at least every good man) had a *guardian Angel* appointed him by God, to take a special care of him and his concerns both spiritual and temporal; to guard him from dangers, to direct and prosper him in his way, and to comfort and deliver him in his affliction and distress. And therefore we find among the *Jewish* prayers, used by them at this day, a particular prayer, wherein they request of God, to command the Angels who have the care of human affairs, to help and assist, to preserve and deliver them. But especially they believed good Angels in their attendance upon good men, to be very active and diligent to incline them to good, and to encourage them therein, by holy emotions and suggestions, by secret comfort and assistances, and by opposing evil spirits, and defending

SER M. sending us against their assaults, and by countermin-  
 XXI ing their malicious designs and attempts upon us.

And accordingly we find that the best men among the *Jews* did stedfastly believe, if not the *particular guardianship* of Angels, and that every good man had his *particular Angel* assigned to him by God, to take the particular charge of him ; yet the *common ministry* of good Angels, about good men ; and their more *especial care* of *particular persons*, upon *particular and great occasions*, to protect them from temporal evils, and to promote and prosper their temporal affairs and concernments.

Of this, *Abraham, the father of the faithful*, and *the friend of God*, was most firmly persuaded (at least in matters of great moment and concernment to us) as appears by his discourse with his steward, when he was sending him to treat of a match for his son, *Gen. 24. 40. The Lord (says he) before whom I walk, will send his Angel with thee, and prosper thy way.* And *David, the man after God's own heart*, does more than once declare his confident belief of the watchful care and ministry of Angels about good men, *Psal. 34. and 7. The Angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* And, *Psal. 91. 11, 12. speaking of the good man, who putteth his trust and confidence in God, he tells him for his comfort and security, that the holy Angels have a particular charge of him to preserve him from all the mischiefs and dangers to which he is exposed ; he shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways ; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

So that according to the persuasion of those two excellent persons, and of greatest renown for piety in all the Old Testament, very much of the safety and the success of good men, even in their temporal concernments, is to be ascribed to the vigilant care and protection of good Angels. And tho' this be seldom visible and sensible to us, yet we have great  
 reason,

reason, upon so great testimonies, to assent to the S E R M. truth of it. And there is no reason I think to doubt, XXI. but that God's care extends *now* to *Christians*, as  well as it did to the *Jews*; and that the Angels have as much kindness for *us*, as they had for the *Jews*; and there is no reason to think, that the Angels are *now* either dead or idle.

Our Saviour tells us, that they cannot die; and our reason tells us, that a pure spirit is an active principle; and the scripture represents Angels as all *flame* and *wings*. Evil spirits are believed by *Christians* to be as active *now* to all purposes of harm and mischief, as ever: And why should any man imagine, that good spirits are not as intent and busy to do good? The Apostle (I am sure) tells us in *the text*, that the Angels in common (all of them) do employ their service about us, and wait to do good offices to us; *are they not all* (says he) *ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?*

And our Saviour, *Matth. 18. 10.* seems to approve and confirm the tradition of the *Jews*, concerning *particular guardian Angels* belonging to every one that believed in him; that is, to every Christian; *take heed* (says he) *that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven, their Angels always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* And this seems likewise to have been a received opinion among the first *Christians*; for we find, *Acts 12. 15.* that when *Peter* was miraculously released out of prison by an Angel, and came to the house where the *Christians* were assembled to pray for him, and one told them, *that Peter was at the door, they said it was his Angel*; thinking that he himself was fast in prison: For which saying there could be no reason, had there not been a current opinion among them of *guardian Angels*.

And because the providence of God is more peculiarly concerned, in conducting men to eternal happiness; it is very credible, that God should more espe-



S E R M. cially ordain the ministry of Angels about good men,  
 XXI. for the furtherance of their salvation. And so the  
 ~~~~~ Apostle tells us in the text ; *are they not all ministering  
 spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs
 of salvation ?* Nay, our Saviour, in that remarkable
 place I mentioned before, *Matth. 18. 10.* seems to
 intimate, that Angels of a *higher rank and quality*,
 are assign'd *guardians and guides* to those that believed
 on him ; *but I say unto you, that in heaven, their An-
 gels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in
 heaven :* An allusion to the manner of earthly kings,
 upon whom not all the servants, *but the chief of the
 nobility* do more immediately attend, and stand conti-
 nually in their presence ; for *to behold the face of the
 king, and to stand in his presence*, are phrases used in
 scripture to signifie *immediate attendance upon his per-
 son.* So that by this manner of expression, our Sa-
 viour doth most significantly intimate, in what esteem
 good men are with God, whose care and protection
 he commits to *the chief of the Angels*, to those who are
 nearest to him, and in highest favour and honour
 with him ; as if he had said, *their Angels* are not of
 the *ordinary rank*, but such as are admitted to a *more
 immediate attendance* upon the great king and governor
 of the world.

And no doubt it is for no mean end, that such
 high and glorious spirits are employ'd about us ; it is
 chiefly for the furtherance of our salvation ; for the
 purchasing whereof, the Son of God himself (*whom
 all the Angels of heaven worship*) came down from
 heaven, and appeared and suffered in our nature, that
 we may one day *be made like to the Angels*, and dwell
 where they are, and may *continually behold the face of
 our Father which is in heaven, as they do.* And in
 order to this end, it is very probable, that good An-
 gels are ready to do good offices, just contrary to
 those of evil spirits ; that is, to employ their best di-
 ligence and endeavour for the salvation of men ; and
 that they are very sedulous and officious to restrain
 and

and pull them back from sin, and to excite and sol- cite them to that which is good ; and in a word, to do all they can to help forward the repentance and conversion of sinners. And this may reasonably be collected from that passage of our Saviour, *Luke 15. 10.* where he tells us, *That there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.* And if they be so glad of the repentance of a sinner ; we may easily imagine how forward they are, to further and promote so good a work. And when sinners are brought to repentance, we have no reason to doubt, but that the Angels are as ready to assist their progress in goodness.

It hath been a general, and, I think, not ill-grounded opinion, both of the *Jews* and *heathens*, that good Angels are more especially present with us, and observant of us, and assistant to us, in the performance of all acts of religion ; that they are particularly present at our prayers ; and therefore the *Jews* speak of a particular Angel for this purpose, whom they call the *Angel of prayer* ; that they observe our vows, and our breach or performance of them. So *Solomon* seems to intimate, *Eccl. 5. 4, 6.* *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it ; for he hath no pleasure in fools ; pay that which thou hast vowed. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin ; that is, do not entangle thy life with a rash vow, which the frailty of human nature may make thee afterwards to break ; neither say thou before the Angel, that it was an error ; that is, do not in the presence of the Angel who attends upon thee, and observes thee, betray thine own error and rashness.* This I take to be the meaning of this difficult passage, *let not thy mouth cause thy flesh to sin ; neither say thou before the Angel, that it was an error.*

But the Angels are yet more particularly present in the places, and at the times of God's publick worship. The placing of *the cherubims in the holy of holies,*

S E R M. *lies*, seems to signifie the presence of the Angels in
XXI. our most religious addresses to God. And *Plutarco*

says, that the Angels are the overseers of divine service.
And therefore we ought to behave ourselves with all
modesty, reverence and decency in the worship of
God, out of regard to the Angels who are there pre-
sent, and observe our carriage and behaviour. And
to this the Apostle plainly hath respect in that place,
which by interpreters hath been thought so difficult,
1 Cor. 11. ¹⁰ where he says, *that for this cause, in*
the assembly of Christians for the worship of God,
the woman ought to have a veil upon her head, in token
of subjection to her husband, because of the Angels;
that is, to be decently and modestly attired in the
church, because of the presence of the holy Angels;
before whom we should compose ourselves to the
greatest *external gravity and reverence*, which the
Angels behold and observe, but cannot penetrate in-
to the *inward devotion* of our minds, which God on-
ly can do; and therefore with regard to him who
sees our hearts, we should more particularly compose
our minds to the greatest *sincerity and seriousness* in our
devotion. Which I would to God, we would all
duly consider, all the while we are exercised in the
worship of God, who chiefly regards our hearts.
But we ought likewise to be very careful of our *ex-*
ternal behaviour, with a particular regard to the An-
gels, who are present there, to see and observe *the out-*
ward decency and reverence of our carriage and de-
portment: Of which we are very careful in the pre-
sence even of an earthly prince, when he either speaks
to us, or we make any address to him. And surely
much more ought we to be so, when we are in the
immediate presence of God, and of his *holy Angels*,
every one of whom is a much greater prince, and of
greater power, than any of the princes of this world.
But how little is this considered (I speak to our shame)
and by how few among us!

And

And as Angels are helpful to good men, in work-
 ing out of their salvation throughout the course of
 their lives; so at the hour of death they stand by
 them, to comfort them and assist them in that need-
 ful and dismal time, in that last and great conflict of
 frail mortality with death and the powers of darkness;
 to receive their expiring spirits into their charge, and
 to conduct them safely into the mansions of the blef-
 sed. And to this purpose also the *Jews* had a tradi-
 tion, that the Angels wait upon good men at their
 death, to convey their souls into paradise: Which is
 very much countenanced by our Saviour in the pa-
 rable of the *rich man and Lazarus*, Luke 16. 22.
 where it is said, *that when Lazarus died, he was car-
 ried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom.*

Nay, that the Angels have some charge and care
 of the bodies of good men after death, may not im-
 probably be gathered from that passage in St. *Jude*,
 ver. 9. where *Michael the Archangel* is said to have
 contended with the devil, about the body of *Moses*.
 What the ground of this controversy betwixt them
 was, may be most probably explained, by a passage,
Deut. 34. 6. where it is said, *that God took particular
 care (probably by an Angel) concerning the burying of
 Moses in a certain valley; and it is added, but no man
 knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.* The devil, it
 seems, had a fair prospect of laying a foundation for
 idolatry, in the worship of *Moses* after his death; if
 he could have gotten the disposal of his body, to
 have buried it in some known and publick place.
 And no doubt it would have gratified him not a little,
 to have made him, who was so declared an enemy to
 idolatry all his life, an occasion of it after his death.
 But this God thought fit to prevent, in pity to the
 people of *Israel*, whom he saw upon all occasions so
 prone to idolatry; and for that reason committed it
 to the charge of *Michael the Archangel*, to bury his
 body secretly; and this was the thing which *Michael
 the Archangel* contended with the devil about.

SERM. But before I pass from this, I cannot but take notice of one memorable circumstance in this contest, mentioned likewise by St. Jude, in these words, yet *Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation.* His duty restrained him from it, and probably his discretion too: As he durst not offend God, in doing a thing so much beneath the dignity and perfection of his nature; so he could not but think, that the devil would have been too hard for him at railing; a thing to which as the Angels have no disposition, so I believe that they have no talent, no faculty at it. The cool consideration whereof should make all men, especially those who call themselves *divines*, and especially in controversies about religion, ashamed and afraid of this manner of disputing; since *Michael the Archangel, even when he disputed with the devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation.*

But to proceed. This we are sure of, that the Angels shall be the great ministers and instruments of the resurrection of our bodies, and the re-union of them to our souls. For so our blessed Saviour has told us, *Matth. 24. 30.* That *when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; he shall send his Angels to gather the elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Thus I have as briefly as I could, and so far as the scripture hath gone before us, to give us light in this matter, endeavoured to shew the several ways wherein good Angels do minister in behalf of them who shall be heirs of salvation. All that now remains, is to draw some inferences from this discourse, and so I shall conclude.

First, What hath been said upon this argument, and so abundantly proved from scripture, may serve to establish us in the belief of the truth, and to awaken us to a due consideration of it. That the Angels are invisible to us, and that we are seldom sensible

sensible of their presence, and the good offices they do us, is no sufficient reason against the truth and reality of the thing, if by other arguments we are convinced of it. For by the same reason we may almost as well call in question the existence of God, and of our own souls; neither of which do fall under the notice of our senses; and yet by other arguments we are sufficiently convinced of them both. So in this case, the general consent and tradition of mankind, concerning the existence of Angels, and their ministry, about us, especially being confirmed to us, by clear and express testimony of holy scripture, ought to be abundant evidence to us, when we consider that so general consent must have a proportionable cause; which can be no other but a general tradition grounded at first upon revelation, and derived down to all succeeding ages, from the first spring and original of mankind; and since confirmed by manifold revelations of God, both in the Old and New Testament.

But yet I am sensible, that all this is no conviction to the perverse and contentious. Men will not believe even the evidence of sense itself, when they are strongly prepossessed and prejudiced to the contrary: For do we not see great numbers of men, even so many as have the face to call themselves the *catholick church*, that can make a shift, when they have a mind, either to believe or disbelieve things contrary to the plainest evidence of their senses? All that I shall say farther about this matter, is, that this doctrine of *Angels* is not a peculiar doctrine either of the *Jewish* or *christian religion*, but the general doctrine of all *religions* that ever were; and therefore cannot be objected against by any but the atheists.

And yet after all, I know not whence it comes to pass, that this great truth, which is so comfortable to mankind, is so very little considered by us. Perhaps the corruption of so great a part of the christian church, in the point of *the worship of Angels*, may have run us so far into the other extreme, as scarcely

S E R M. to acknowledge any benefit we receive by them. But
 XXI. surely we may believe they do us good, without any
 obligation to pray to them; and may own them as
 the ministers of God's providence, without making
 them the objects of our worship.

I confess it seems to me a very odd thing, that the power of the devil, and his influence upon men, and the particular vigilancy and activity of evil spirits to tempt us to sin, should be so readily owned, and so sensibly talked of among christians; and yet the assistance of good Angels should be so little taken notice of and considered by us. The scripture speaks plainly of both, and the reasons for believing both are equal: For God forbid but that good Angels should be as officious and forward to do us good, as the devil and his angels are malicious and busy to do us mischief. And, indeed, it would be very hard with mankind, if we had not as much reason to hope for the assistance and protection of good spirits, as we have cause to fear the malice and fury of the bad. Good Angels are certainly as powerful, and have as strong a propension and inclination to do good, as the devil has to do harm; and the number of good Angels is probably much greater than of evil spirits. The biggest numbers that are used in scripture, are applied to good Angels, *Dan. 7. 10.* it is said of *the Angels about God's throne*, that *thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.* And *Revelations 5. 11.* the number of them is said to be *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands.* And the apostle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. 12. 22. calls them *an innumerable company of Angels.*

What then should be the reason, that men should be so apt to own the snares and temptations, which the devil lays before us, in all our ways; but take so little notice of the attendance and good offices done to us by good spirits? I can imagine but these *two* reasons, and I am sorry I can find no better; that we
 are

are more mindful of injuries than of benefits; and are glad to take in others for the excuse of our faults, but are loth any should come in for a share in the good that is done by us. And yet methinks it should be a very comfortable consideration to us, against the enmity and cunning of the devil, and his Angels; that the holy Angels of God are as intent and industrious to do us good, and to help forward our salvation, as evil spirits can be to work our ruin and destroy us.

Secondly, We should with great thankfulness acknowledge the great goodness of God to us, who takes such care of us, as to appoint his Angels, and to give them particular commission and charge concerning us, to protect and assist us in all our ways, and especially to promote the great concernment of our eternal happiness: And that not only some particular and inferiour spirits, but the chief ministers of this great King of the world, those that *stand in his presence, and behold his face*; and not a few of these, but the whole order of them are employed about us. So the Apostle seems to say, by the question which he puts in the text, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister?* That is, all, at one time or other. And tho' they be principally appointed to minister to us, in order to our salvation; yet we have no reason to doubt but God employs them many times for our temporal safety, and makes use of them more especially in those *great revolutions*, in which his *cause* and *religion* are more immediately concerned.

In such a case, it is not at all incredible, that God should give his Angels a particular charge concerning those that *fight his battels*; to *pitch about their camps*, and secretly to assist them against their enemies, and to ward off, and put by many dangerous blows and thrusts, which are made at them; and wonderfully to preserve them, when the instruments of death fly about them, and do execution on every side of them. To what can we ascribe *such* and *so many* remarkable deliverances of a person upon whom so much depends; but

S E R M. but either to the immediate hand of God, or to the
 XX. miniftry of Angels? And where God is provided fo
 abundantly, with fuch powerful beings and minifters
 of his will; though they may be invifible to us, yet
 there is great reason to believe, that he very feldom
 works without them.

And now what an aftonifhing regard is this, which
 the great God is pleafed to have for the fons of men,
 that he fhould make the whole creation ferviceable
 to us; not only the vifible creation, for the fupport
 of our bodies, and the diverfion of our minds; but
 even the nobleft of all his creatures, the great and
 glorious inhabitants of the invifible world, mighti-
 ly furpaffing us mortal men, in the fimplicity and
 purity of their nature, in the quicknefs and large-
 nefs of their underftandings, and in their power and
 vigour of acting: I fay, that God fhould give thefe
 excellent and glorious beings the charge over us,
 and fend them forth to minifter to us, for the fafe-
 guard of our perfons, for the fuccefs of our affairs,
 and for the fecurity and furtherance of our eternal
 falvation! *Lord what is man, that thou art thus mindful*
of him, that when thou madeft him lower than the Angels,
thou fhouldeft yet make the Angels to minifter unto him!

Thirdly, If the Angels have the particular charge
 of good men, we fhould take heed how we defpife,
 or be any way injurious to them: For how defpica-
 ble foever they may appear to us, they are certainly
 very dear to God; fince he deems them fo confi-
 derable, as to employ his chief minifters about them,
 and to commit the charge of them to thofe, who,
 by their office, do more immediately attend upon
 himfelf. This is our Saviour's own argument, *Matth.*
18. Take heed that ye defpife not one of thefe little ones;
for I fay unto you, their Angels do continually behold the
face of your Father which is in heaven. With how
 much contempt foever we may look upon a poor
 good man, he hath friends and patrons of a higher
 fort, than any of the princes of this world.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, If God appointed Angels to be *ministring* S E R M.
spirits in our behalf ; we may thence very reasonably XXI.
conclude, that God did not intend that we should 
worship them. This seems to be a clear consequence,
if the reasoning of the Angel in the *revelation* be
good ; where he forbids St. *John to worship him ; be-*
cause he was his fellow-servant. Yea, the consequence
seems to be yet stronger from the text ; that if they
be not only *fellow-servants*, but do in some sort *mi-*
nister unto us, then we are not to *worship* them.

And yet this practice is openly avowed in the
church of *Rome* ; though it be reprov'd so very se-
verely by the Apostle, as an apostacy from christiani-
ty, *Coloss. 2. 18, 19. Let no man* (says he) *deceive*
you, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels ;
not holding the head ; as if it were a renouncing of
Christ, out of a pretended humility, to make use of
other mediators besides him to the Father. And not-
withstanding also that the Angel in the *Revelation*
does so vehemently forbid it, *see un by no means, upon*
no terms to do it ; and he forbids it for such a reason as
makes it for ever unlawful ; namely, that we ought
not to worship those who serve and worship God to-
gether with us ; *Do it not*, says the Angel, *I am thy*
fellow-servant, worship thou God. In which words,
he plainly directs us to the sole and proper object of
our worship.

Bellarmino, the great champion of the popish cause,
never us'd more gross and apparent shuffling, than in
answer to this text. He says first, *Why are we re-*
prov'd for doing what St. John did ? To which the
answer is very easy ; because St. *John* himself was re-
prov'd by an Angel for doing what he did. And
now that his question is answered, one might me-
thinks, ask him a cross question or two. Why does
the church of *Rome* presume to do that, which an
Angel does so expressly forbid to be done ? Or was
it fit for St. *John* to worship one, who (according to
Bellarmino) was so ignorant in the doctrine of the ca-
tholick

S E R M. tholick church, as to reprove him for doing his duty?

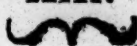
XXI. as is evident from his *second* crafty answer to this text,
 *That St. John did well to give due worship to the Angel:*
 And yet it is plain from this text, that the Angel did not think the worship which St. *John* gave him, to be his due.

It is very hard to imagine, but that a man of *Bel-larmine's* understanding did intend to give up the cause, in his answers to this text: But if he was in earnest, then the matter is brought to this plain and short issue; *Whether it be fitter for us to believe a Cardinal of Rome, or an Angel of God?*

Lastly, We should imitate the holy Angels, by endeavouring to serve God as they do, in ministring to the good of others. Whilst we are in the body, in this state of infirmity and imperfection; though we cannot serve God with the same activity and vigour that the blessed Angels do, yet we may in the same sincerity, and with the same true pleasure and delight.

And we should learn also of them, to condescend to the meanest services, for the good of others. If the Angels, who are no ways allied to us, do so much excel us, in the dignity and perfection of their nature (for though *David* says, that *God made man little lower than the Angels*; his meaning is, that he made him next below the Angels in the rank of beings; but yet very distant from them in perfection) I say, if those glorious creatures, who are *the chief of the ways and works of God*, do not think much to humble themselves to be ministers on our behalf; shall we be so proud as to think much to stoop to the lowest offices, to serve one another?

You see, my brethren, what is the constant work and employment of the blessed spirits above; to do good to men, especially in order to their eternal happiness; and this is the highest degree of charity, and charity is the highest perfection of men and Angels: So that to employ ourselves, with all our minds, and with all
 our

our might, to help forward the salvation of others, is **S E R M.**
to be good *Angels* (I had almost said to be a kind of **XXI.**
Gods) to men. 

I hope that we all of us do hope one day to be *like the Angels*, in the purity and perfection of their nature. So our Saviour has told us, that *at the resurrection we shall be like the Angels* : Now as they are the patterns of our hope and happiness ; so let us make them the examples of our duty and obedience ; according as our Saviour hath taught us to pray, *that God's will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven* ; that is, that we may serve God, and do his will here on earth (so far as the infirmity of our nature and of our present state will admit) with the same readiness and diligence, with the same chearfulness and zeal, that the holy and blessed Angels do in heaven. And let us aspire continually in our minds, after that blessed time, when we shall be free from sin and sorrow, from affliction and pain, from diseases and death ; when we shall serve God without distraction, and do his will without weariness, and shall *be for ever with the Lord, amidst an innumerable company of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect*.

Finally, Let us bless God, as for all the visible effects of his merciful providence towards us, so likewise for the invisible aids and protection of his holy Angels ; many times probably vouchsafed to us, when we are but little aware of it. But above all, let us bless him for his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who *was made a little lower than the Angels*, that is, a mortal man ; *that by the suffering of death for our sakes, he might be clothed with glory and honour, according to the working of that mighty power which God wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*
To

To him, O Father, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

*Preach'd on
Saint Luke's
Day.*

S E R M O N XXII.

*The Reputation of Good Men, after
Death.*

P S A L. CXII. 6.

The latter part of the Verse.

The Righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance

S E R M.
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AS the desire and hope of immortality, which is implanted in human nature, is some evidence of the thing; so likewise that natural desire which is in men, to have a good name perpetuated, and to be remembered, and mentioned with honour, when they are dead and gone, is a sign, that there is in human nature some presage of a life after death; in which they hope, among other rewards of well-doing, to meet with this also, to be well spoken of to posterity: And though probably we should not know the good that is said of us, when we are dead, yet it is an encouragement to virtue, to be secured of it before-hand; and to find by experience, that they who have done their part well in

this life, go off with applause ; and that the memory of their good actions is preserved and transmitted to posterity. SERM.
XXII.

And among the many advantages of piety and virtue, this is not altogether inconsiderable, that it reflects an honour upon our memory after death ; which is a thing much more valuable, than to have our bodies preserved from putrefaction : For *that* I think is the meaning of *Solomon*, when he prefers a good name before precious ointment, *Eccl. 7. 1. A good name is better than precious ointment.* This they used in embalming of dead bodies, to preserve them from noisomness and corruption : But *a good name* preserves a man's memory, and makes it grateful to posterity ; which is a far greater benefit, than that of *a precious ointment*, which serves only to keep a dead body from stench and rottenness.

I shall briefly explain the words, and then consider the matter contained in them ; *the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.* By the *righteous* is probably here meant *the good man* in general ; for though justice and righteousness, are in scripture frequently used for that particular virtue, whereby a man is disposed to render to every man his own ; which is known by the name of *justice* ; yet it is less frequently, and perhaps in this place, used in a larger sense, so as to comprehend all *piety* and *virtue*. For so *the righteous man* is described at the beginning of this *Psalms*, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments :* And he is opposed to *the wicked man*, ver. 10. *the wicked shall see it and be grieved ;* that is, he shall be troubled to see the prosperity of the *righteous* ; the manifold blessings of his life, and the good name he shall leave behind him at his death ; which is the meaning of his *being in everlasting remembrance* ; that is, long after he is dead, perhaps for many ages, he shall be well spoken of, and his name mentioned with honour, and his good deeds recorded and remembered to all posterity.

So

SERM.

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That eminently good men, do commonly leave a good name behind them, and transmit a grateful memory of themselves to after-ages. I say commonly, for so we are to understand these kind of sayings; not that they are strictly, and universally true, without exception; but usually, and for the most part. It is possible, that a good man may soon be forgotten, by the malice of men; or through the partiality and iniquity of the age, may have his name blemished after death, and be mis-represented to posterity: But *for the most part* it is otherwise; and though the world be very wicked, yet it seldom deals so hardly and unjustly with men of eminent goodness and virtue, as to defraud them of their due praise and commendation after death. It very frequently happens otherwise to good men, whilst they are alive; nay, they are then very seldom so justly treated, as to be generally esteemed and well spoken of, and to be allowed their due praise and reputation: But after death, their good name is generally secured and vindicated, and posterity does them that right, which perhaps the age wherein they lived denied to them. Therefore in the prosecution of this argument, I shall enquire into these *two* things.

First, Whence it comes to pass, that good men are very often defrauded of their just praise and reputation, whilst they are alive: And,

Secondly, What Security they have of a good name after death.

First, Whence it comes to pass, that good men are so frequently defrauded of their just praise and reputation, while they are alive. And to give ourselves full satisfaction in this matter, *two* things are fit to be enquired into.

1. From what cause this proceeds.
2. For what reason the providence of God doth often permit it.

(1.) From

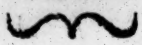
(1.) From what cause it proceeds, that good men SERM.
have so often the hard fate to be ill spoken of, and XXII.
to be severely censured, and to have their worth 
much detracted from, while they are alive.

And this proceeds partly from good men themselves; and partly from others.

1. Good men themselves are many times the cause of it. For the best men are imperfect; and present and visible imperfections do very much lessen and abate the reputation of a man's goodness. It cannot be otherwise, but that the lustre of a great piety and virtue should be somewhat obscured, by that mixture of human frailty which does necessarily attend this state of imperfection: And though a man by great care and consideration, by great vigilancy and pains with himself, be arrived to that degree and pitch of goodness, as to have but a very few visible failings, and those small, in comparison; yet when these come to be scanned and commented upon, by envy or ill-will, they will be strangely inflamed and magnified, and made much greater, and more than in truth they are. But there are few persons in the world, of that excellent goodness, but besides the common and more pardonable frailties of humanity, they do now and then discover something, which might perhaps justly deserve a severe censure, if some amends were not made for it, by many and great virtues.

Very good men are subject to considerable imprudences, and sudden passions; and especially to an affected severity and moroseness of carriage; which is very disgustful, and apt to beget dislike. And they are the more incident to these kind of imperfections; because out of a just hatred of the vicious customs and practices of the world, and to keep out of the way of temptation, they think it safest to retire from the world as much as they can; being loth to venture themselves, more than needs, in so infectious an air. By this means, their spirits are apt to be a little sour, and they must necessarily be ignorant of many points

S E R M. of civility, and good humour, which are great ornaments of virtue, though not of the essence of it.



Now two or three faults in a good man, if an uncharitable man have but the handling and managing them, may easily cast a considerable blemish upon his reputation; because the better the man is, so much the more conspicuous are his faults; as spots are soonest discovered, and most taken notice of, in a pure and white garment. Besides that, in matters of censure, mankind do much encline to the harder side; and but very few persons are so charitable and equal, as to construe things to the best sense, and to consider a man all together; and fairly to set the good that is in him, against his faults and imperfections. But,

2. Though good men many times contribute too much, to the lessening of their own reputation, with those among whom they live; yet the principal cause of their suffering in this kind, is not from themselves, but others; and that upon these three accounts:

1. From the hatred and opposition of bad men to holiness and virtue; and these are commonly the greatest number, and make the loudest cry. They are declared enemies to *goodness*; and then how can it be expected, they should have any great kindness for *good men*? They want virtue themselves; and therefore they think themselves upbraided by the good qualities of others.

This enmity of wicked men against the righteous, and the true reason of it, is very well expressed in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, chap. 2. ver. 12. *Let us (say they) lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, and is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraideth us with our offending the law, and he objecteth to our infamy, the sins of our youth; he was made to reprove our thoughts, therefore he is grievous unto us, even to behold; for his life is not like other men, he is quite of another fashion; we are esteemed of him as reprobate*
silver

silver, he abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness. SERM.

This is that which filleth the minds of wicked men XXII. with malice against the righteous; and malice will easily invent ways to blast any man's reputation. Good men do sometimes, as it is their duty, reprove those that are bad; or if they do it not in word, yet they upbraid them in their actions, and contrary course of life; and both these are grievous and provoking to them. Not but that wicked men are many times in their consciences convinced of the real goodness of those whom they speak against; but they will not own it, lest in so doing they should condemn themselves.

2. Another cause of this, is the envy of those, who perhaps have some degree of goodness themselves. For great virtue is apt to raise envy in those who fall short of it; and this makes those who are but imperfectly good, to detract from the eminent worth of others; because they are sensible they are outshined by them, and that it occasions a disadvantageous comparison, and makes their defects taken notice of.

They can endure a man that is moderately good, and keeps pace with his neighbours: But if he endeavour to outstrip them, they presently combine against him, and take all opportunities to undermine his reputation; and will be very glad, either *to find* a blot in his escutcheon, or *to fix* one there.

3. There is something in the very presence and nearness of goodness and virtue, which is apt to lessen it.

In matters of *sense*, the nearer the object is, the bigger it appears; and the farther distant it is from us, the less it seems to be: But *here* it is quite otherwise; men are not so apt to value present worth, when yet they will reverence it mightily at a distance.

I know not whence it comes to pass, but so we certainly find it; that men are more sensible of the goodness and excellency of any thing, under the want of it, than while they enjoy it; and do usually

S E R M. value it more when it is gone, than they did whilst it was present with them. Whilst we live with good men, and converse with them every day, we take but little notice of them; but no sooner are they departed but we admire them, and every man's mouth is open to celebrate their good qualities. Perhaps familiarity, and acquaintance, and conversation does insensibly beget something of contempt; but whatever the reason of it be, we find the thing most certainly true in experience.

2. Let us consider in the next place, for what reasons the providence of God permits it thus to be. I shall mention but these *two*.

1. To keep good men humble, and, as the expression is in *Job*, *to hide pride from men*.

God's providence, in the disposal and ordering of things in this world, seems rather to consult our safety, than our satisfaction; and the security of our virtue, than the full reward of it. Now if good men should always meet with that clear esteem and reputation, which their goodness deserves, they would be in great danger of being puffed up with a proud conceit of themselves; and pride is enough to supplant the greatest virtue in the world; such a *dead fly*, as this, were sufficient *to spoil a box of the most precious ointment*. For man is an ambitious creature, and *vain* above all things; so *vain*, as not only to be covetous of praise, but even patient of flattery; and the best of men lie too open, on this blind side of human nature; and therefore God, *who knows our frame*, and how apt dust and ashes are to be proud, hath in his wise and merciful providence so disposed things, that good men are seldom exposed to the full force of so strong a temptation. And for this reason he lets loose envious and malicious tongues to detract from good men, for a check to the vanity of human nature, and to keep their virtue safe, under the protection of humility.

And

And this is the way likewise to secure the reputation which they have, and which otherwise would be in danger of being lost: For he that is once proud of the esteem he hath got, takes the readiest way to fall into contempt; and certainly it is better of the two, that our reputation should suffer a little by the malice of others, than be ruined by our pride and vanity.

S E R M.
XXII.

God does not envy good men the reputation of their goodness and virtue; but he knows the weakness of human nature, and *will not suffer it to be tempted, above what it is able.* When good men are grown up to perfection, and able to bear it, as they will be when they come to heaven, their good name shall be fully vindicated, and they shall have praise, not only from men, but from Angels, and from God himself.

2. This life is not the proper season of reward, but of work and service.

In this life, God is pleased to give some present encouragement to piety and virtue, but reserves the main of our recompence to be bestowed upon us at the end of our work. When our *course is finished*, then, and not before, we must expect our *crown*; when our accounts are cast up and stated, and it appears what improvement we have made of our talents, then will come the *Euge bone serve, Well done good and faithful servant.* In the mean time, good men must be content with such a portion of esteem, as an envious and ill-natured world will afford them.

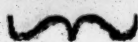
And thus I have done with the *first* thing I proposed to enquire into; whence it comes to pass, that good men are frequently defrauded of their due praise and reputation, while alive. I proceed to the

Second enquiry, namely, What security good men have of a good name after death,

And the true account of this is to be given, partly from the *providence of God*, and partly from the *nature of the thing.*

S E R M.
XXII.

(1.) From the *providence of God*; which is concerned herein, upon a *twofold* account.



1. In respect of the *equity* of it.

2. In regard of the *example* of it.

1. In respect of the *equity* of it. God, who will not be behind-hand with any man, concerns himself, to secure to good men the proper reward of their piety and virtue. Now praise is one of the most proper recompences of good and virtuous actions; this good men seldom meet with in this life, without a great deal of allay and abatement; and therefore the providence of God hath so ordered things, that it should come in the properest season, when our work is done, and when we are out of the danger of the temptation of it.

2. In regard of the *example* of it. It is a great argument to virtue, and encouragement to men to act their part well, to see good men applauded, when they go off the stage. Every man that hath any spark of generosity in him, is desirous of fame; and though men care not how soon it comes, yet they will be glad to have it after death, rather than not at all. Piety and virtue would be but very melancholy and uncomfortable things, if they should always be so unfortunate, as never to meet with due esteem and approbation; but when men are assured, that they shall have this reward, one time or other, and observe it to be so in experience; this is a great spur and encouragement to do virtuously: And a great mind, that hath a just sense of reputation and a good name, will be content to lay in for it before-hand; and patiently to wait the time which God knows fittest for the bestowing of it.

(2.) The other part of the account of this truth, is to be given from the *nature of the thing*: Because death removes and takes away the chief obstacle of a good man's reputation. For then his defects are out of sight, and men are contented that his imperfections should be buried in his grave with him. Death hath

hath put him out of the reach of malice and envy ; S E R M.
his worth and excellency does now no longer stand in XXII.
other men's light ; his great virtues are at a distance ;
and not so apt to be brought into comparison, to the
prejudice and disadvantage of the living ; *mortui non*
mordent ; the example of the dead, is not so cutting
a reproof to the vice of the living ; the good man is
removed out of the way, and his example, how
bright soever, is not so scorching and troublesome at
a distance ; and therefore men are generally contented,
to give him his due character.

Besides, that there is a certain civility in humane
nature, which will not suffer men to wrong the dead,
and to deny them the just commendation of their
worth. Even the *scribes* and *pharisees*, (as bad a sort
of men as we can well imagine) though they were
just like their fathers in persecuting and slaying the
prophets, while they were alive ; yet had they a
mighty veneration for their piety and virtue, after
they were dead, and thought no honour too great to
be done to them. They would be at the charge of
raising monuments to the memory of those good men,
whom their fathers had slain ; and whom they would
certainly have used in the very same manner, had
they either lived in the days of those prophets, or
those prophets had lived in their days, as our Saviour
plainly told them.

All that now remains is to draw some *inferences* from
what hath been said by way of application ; and they
shall be these *three*.

1. To vindicate the honour and respect which the
christian church, for many ages, hath paid to the
memory of *the first teachers and martyrs* of our re-
ligion.

2. To encourage us to piety and goodness, from
this consideration ; that *the righteous shall be in ever-*
lasting remembrance.

De mortuis
nihil nisi
bonum

SERM. 3. That when we pretend to honour the memory
 XXII. of good men, we would be careful to imitate their
 holiness and virtue.

1. To vindicate the honour, which the christian church hath for many ages done to *the first teachers* and *martyrs* of our religion; I mean more especially to *the holy Apostles* of our Lord and Saviour; to whose honour, the christian church hath thought fit to set apart solemn times, for the commemoration of their piety and suffering, and to stir up others to the imitation of them.

This certainly can with no good colour, either from scripture or reason, be pretended to be unlawful; and when *David* here says, *the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance*, he cannot certainly be thought to exclude the most solemn way of commemorating their piety and virtue.

I do not pretend this custom can be derived from the very first ages of christianity; but surely it is sufficient, for the lawfulness of it, that it is no where forbidden; nay it is rather required here in the text; the best way to preserve the memory of good men, being thus to commemorate them. And it may be of great use to us, if it be not our own fault; the setting before our eyes the holy lives of excellent men, being in it's own nature apt to excite us to the imitation of them.

Besides that I could tell you, that though this cannot be proved so ancient, as some vainly pretend; yet it is of great antiquity in the church, and did begin in some of the best ages of christianity. *Memoria Martyrum*, *the meetings of Christians at the tombs of the martyrs* was practised long before the degeneracy of the *western church*; and the christians were wont at those meetings, solemnly to commemorate the faith and constancy of those good men, and to encourage themselves from their examples.

I know very well, that this did in time degenerate into gross superstition, which afterward gave colour
 and

and occasion to that gross and idolatrous practice in the church of *Rome*, of *worshipping saints*. But this abuse is no sufficient reason for us to give over the celebrating of the memory of such holy men, as *the Apostles* and *martyrs* of Christ were; and propounding them to ourselves for our patterns. We may still lawfully give *them their due honour*; though the church of *Rome* hath so overdone it, as to rob God of *his*. S E R M.
XXII.

2. Let this consideration, that *the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance*, be an encouragement to us to piety and goodness. This to a generous nature, that is sensible of honour and reputation, is no small reward and encouragement. Before the happiness of heaven was clearly revealed, and *life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel*, one of the greatest motives to worthy and virtuous deeds, was the earnest desire which men had of leaving a good name behind them, and of perpetuating the fame and glory of their actions to after ages. Upon this ground chiefly, many of the bravest spirits among the heathen were animated to virtue, and, with the hazard of their lives, to do great and glorious exploits for their country.

And certainly it is an argument of a great mind, to be moved by this consideration, and a sign of a low and base spirit to neglect it. He that hath no regard to his fame, is lost to all purposes of virtue and goodness; when a man is once come to this, not to care what *others say* of him, the next step is, to have no care what *himself does*. *Quod conscientia est apud Deum, id fama est apud homines*; what conscience is in respect of God, that is fame in respect of men. Next to a good conscience, a clear reputation ought to be to every man the dearest thing in the world. Men have generally a great value for riches; and yet the scripture pronounceth *him* the happier man, that leaves a good name, than him that leaves a great estate behind him. *Prov. 22. 1. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.*

S E R M.

XXII.

If then we have any regard to a good name; the best way to secure it to ourselves, is by the holy and virtuous actions of a good life. Do well, and thou shalt be well spoken of; if not now, yet by those who shall come after: The surest way to *glory, and honour, and immortality*, is by a *patient continuance in well-doing*. God hath engaged his promise to us to this purpose, *1 Sam. 2. 30. Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. The name of the wicked shall rot*, says Solomon, *Prov. 10. 7.* But God doth usually take a particular care to preserve and vindicate *their* memory, who are careful to *keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them.*

3dly and lastly, Whenever we pretend to do honour to the memory of good men, let us charge ourselves with a strict imitation of their holiness and virtue. The greatest honour we can do to God, or good men, is to endeavour to be like them; to express their virtues, and represent them to the world in our lives. Upon *these days*, we should propound to ourselves, as our patterns, all those holy and excellent persons, who have gone before us; *the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, and all those blessed saints and martyrs, who were faithful to the death, and have received a crown of life and immortality.*

We should represent to ourselves the piety of their actions, and the patience and constancy of their sufferings, that we may imitate their virtues, and be *followers of them, who through faith and patience, have inherited the promises; and seeing we are compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, we should lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Let us imagine all those great examples of piety and virtue, standing about us in a throng, and fixing their eyes upon us. How ought we to demean ourselves in such a presence, and under the eye of such witnesses! And how should we be ashamed to do
any

any thing that is unworthy of such excellent patterns, S E R M.
and blush to look upon *our own* lives, when we re- XXII.
member *theirs* ! Good God ! at what a distance do
the greatest part of christians follow those examples !
and while we honour them with our *lips*, how unlike
are we to them in our *lives* !

Why do we thus reproach ourselves with these
glorious patterns ? Let us either resolve to imitate
their virtues, or to make no mention of their names ;
for while we celebrate the examples of *saints* and *bo-
ly men*, and yet contradict them in our lives, we ei-
ther *mock them*, or *upbraid ourselves*.

*Now the God of peace, who brought again from the
dead our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

S E R M O N.

Preached on
All-Saints
day, 1684.

S E R M O N XXIII.

The Duty of imitating the Primitive Teachers, and Patterns of Christianity.

× H E B. xiii. 7.

The latter part of the verse.

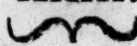
Whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation.

The whole verse runs thus,

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: Whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation.

S E R M.
XXIII.

TH E great scope and design of this epistle, is to persuade the *Jews* who were newly converted to *christianity*, to continue stedfast in the profession of it, notwithstanding all the sufferings and persecutions it was attended withal; and to encourage them hereto, among many other arguments which the apostle makes use of, he doth several times in this epistle propound to them the examples and patterns of saints and holy men, that were gone before them; especially those of their own nation, who, in their respective ages, had given remarkable testimony of their faith in God, and constant adherence to the truth. Chap. 6. 11, 12. *And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence,*

diligence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end; *S E R M.*
that ye be not slothful; but followers of them, who through *XXIII.*
faith and patience inherit the promises. And, Chap. 

11. he gives a catalogue of the eminent heroes and saints of the Old Testament, who by faith had done such wonders, and given such testimony of their patience and constancy, in doing and suffering the will of God; from whence he infers, Chap. 12. 1. that we ought to take pattern and heart from such examples, to persevere in our christian course; *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of martyrs, or witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us;* especially since they had greater examples than these, nearer to them, and more fresh in memory; the great example of our Lord, the founder of our religion; and of the first teachers of christianity, the disciples and apostles of our Lord and Saviour. The example of our Lord himself, the captain and rewarder of our faith, ver. 2. of that 12th chapter; *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame: verse 3. For consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.* This indeed is the great pattern of christians, and, in regard of the great perfection of it, surpasseth all other patterns, and seems to make them useless; as having in it the perfection of the divinity, not in its full brightness (which would be apt to dazle rather than direct us) but allayed and shadowed with the infirmities of human nature; and for that reason, more accommodate and familiar to us than the divine perfections abstractedly considered.

But yet because our blessed Saviour was God as well as man, and clear of all stain of sin (for though he was clothed with the infirmities, yet he was free from the corruption of human nature) therefore the examples

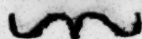
S E R M. ples of *mere men*, liable to sin as we are, may in many respects be more suitable and accommodate to encourage us to the imitation of those virtues, which are attainable by us, in this state of imperfection; for which reason the apostle hath thought fit likewise to propose to us the highest examples of that kind, *the first teachers of our religion*; for of these he seems to speak here in the *text*, namely, those *Apostles*, or *apostolical men*, by whom they had been instructed in the faith of Christ, but were now departed this life; it being very probable, that the apostle here speaks of such as were dead, when he says, *Remember them which have had the rule over you* (or, those that have been your guides) *who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

I say this is very probable, because he minds them to *remember*, which supposeth them to be absent; but especially because he minds them to *consider the end of their conversation*; by which, surely, he means the blessed state of those good men after death; which is elsewhere called *the end of our faith, even the salvation our souls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. So likewise, Rom. 6. 22. this is said to be the *end* of a holy life; *ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life.* And it very much favours this interpretation, that the apostle afterwards speaks of the living guides, and governors of the church, ver. 17. *Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls.*

So that it is highly probable, that the apostle here speaks of such guides, and governors of the church, as had once been over them, but were now departed this life; and therefore he might, with more freedom and less envy, recommend their example to them, and bid them *call to mind their faith*, and exemplary conversation among them, and propose it for a pattern to themselves, considering the happy *end* of it, viz. the blessed state they were now in, and the

the glorious reward they were made partakers of in S E R M.
another life.

XXIII.



In the words thus explained, you have.

I. A duty enjoined, which is, to propose to our selves, for our imitation, the examples of good men that have gone before us; especially the primitive patterns of christianity, and the first teachers of our religion. *Remember them which have been your guides, and have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow.*

II. The motive or encouragement to it, from the consideration of the reward of it; *considering the end of their conversation.*

I. The duty enjoined; which is to propose to our selves, for our imitation, the example of good men that have gone before us; especially the primitive patterns of christianity, and first teachers of our religion. *Remember them that have had the rule over you, that have been your guides, and have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow.* In which words the Apostle bids them call to mind their first guides and instructors in christianity, whom they had known, and heard, and conversed with in this world, but who now *rested from their labours*, and were receiving the reward of them; to remember the doctrines they had heard from them, and the virtues they had seen in them; and to embrace the one, and imitate the other.

Thus *we* cannot remember the primitive teachers, and patterns of christianity, the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour; because *we* did not personally know them, and converse with them, living at the distance of many ages from their time: But *we* may do that which is equivalent, and a kind of remembrance of them; we may commemorate their faith, and the virtue and holiness of their lives; and what we hear and read of them, we may propose for patterns to our selves, and copy them out in our lives and actions: And this is *our* duty, and the same in substance
with

S E R M. with *theirs*, who had the happiness to know and con-
 XXIII. verse with those excellent persons, to hear them
 ~~~~~ preach, and to see the rules and precepts of that  
 holy doctrine, which they taught, exemplified in  
 their lives.

In the handling of this argument, I shall do these  
*three* things.

*First*, Shew why amongst all the examples of good  
 men, we should more especially propose to our imi-  
 tation, the *primitive* teachers, and patterns of our  
 religion.

*Secondly*, Wherein we should imitate them. The  
 Apostle expresseth it in one word, in their faith,  
*whose faith follow*.

*Thirdly*, The encouragement to this, from the con-  
 sideration of the happy state they are in, and the glo-  
 rious reward they are made partakers of; *considering*  
*the end of their conversation*.

*First*, I shall endeavour to shew why among all  
 the examples of good men, we should more espe-  
 cially propose to our imitation, the *primitive* teachers  
 and patterns of our religion, I mean, the holy Apo-  
 stles of our Lord and Saviour, *whose faith* we should  
 endeavour *to follow*, and to imitate the holiness and  
 virtue of their conversation. For *these* certainly come  
 nearest to that most perfect, and excellent pattern of  
 all goodness, *our blessed Saviour*, and are the fairest  
*transcripts* of that unblemished original. Hence it is  
 that St. Paul so frequently exhorts Christians to imi-  
 tate *his* example, and the examples of the other  
*Apostles*; it being reasonable to presume, that *they*  
 came nearest to the pattern of our Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 1.  
*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*  
 Phil. 3. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and*  
*mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.*  
*For our conversation is in heaven.*

And this is reasonable, that the *first* in every kind  
 should be *the rule and pattern* of the rest, and of all  
 that follow after; because it is likely to be most  
 perfect.

perfect. In process of time, the best institutions are apt to decline, and by insensible degrees to swerve, and depart from the perfection of their first state; and therefore it is a good rule, to preserve things from corruption and degeneracy, often to look back to the first institution, and by that to correct those imperfections and errors, which will almost unavoidably creep in with time. SERM. XXIII.

If we would preserve that purity of faith and manners, which our religion requires, we should have frequent recourse to the primitive teachers and patterns of christianity, and endeavour to bring our belief and lives to as near a conformity with theirs, as is possible. Who so likely to deliver the faith and doctrine of Christ pure, and uncorrupted, as the primitive teachers of it, who received it from our Lord himself; and were, by an extraordinary assistance of the holy Spirit, secured from error and mistake in the delivery of it? And who so likely to bring their lives and conversations to an exact conformity with this holy doctrine, as they, who were so thoroughly instructed in it by the best master, and shewn the practice of it in the most perfect example of holiness and virtue? Great reason there is therefore, why all Christians should follow *their* faith, and make *their* conversation more especially the pattern of their lives.

The want of a due regard to these *fountains* of christian doctrine, and the *first* and *best* patterns of christian practice, hath been the great cause of that foul degeneracy of the *Romish* church, both in the doctrine and practice of christianity. They do not follow the faith of the *Apostles*, the *first fathers* and teachers of *christianity*; but of the *fathers of the council of Lateran, and Trent*. Thus have they *forsaken the fountain of living waters* the holy scriptures, and have *hewn to themselves broken cisterns, that will hold no water*; the doctrines and traditions of men. Nay, they have stopt up this *fountain of living waters* from

SERM. the people, and forbid them to come to it; and  
 XXIII. forced them to drink of those impure and puddled  
 streams, which they let out to them; and instead of  
 the lives of *the holy Apostles*, and those eminent *graces*  
 and *virtues* which shined forth in them, they represent  
 to them the patterns of *new saints*; some of which  
*neither they nor their fathers knew*; and indeed never  
 were in being; as St. *Almanach*, and St. *Synoris*, and  
 several others; many of them so far from being *saints*,  
 that they may be reckoned among the *worst* of men;  
 (for instance, our countreyman *Thomas a Becket*, who  
 for pride and rebellion may almost vye with *Lucifer*  
 himself; and yet this ill man, and worst of subjects,  
 was canonized to that height, as for two hundred  
 years together, to engross the worship of these western  
 parts of the world, and to impoverish the shrines of  
 all other saints, even of *the blessed Virgin* herself;) others,  
 such *idiots*, or hot-headed *fanaticks*, that he  
 that reads their Lives would take them to be *fools*  
 and *mad-men* rather than *saints* (as *Francis* and *Do-*  
*minic*, and *Ignatius Loyola*, and several others of the  
 same stamp;) and many the very best of them, so  
 disguised by their legends, that instead of the sub-  
 stantial virtues of a good life, their story is made up  
 of false and fantastical miracles, and ridiculous freaks  
 and superstition.

All which considered, there is great reason why  
 we should have recourse to the *primitive* patterns of  
 faith and holiness, *and be followers of them, who we*  
*are sure were followers of Christ*. I proceed to the

*Second* thing I proposed, namely, wherein we  
 should imitate these patterns. And the Apostle ex-  
 presseth it in one word, in their faith, *whose faith fol-*  
*low*. And the word *faith* is frequently in the New  
 Testament used so largely, as to comprehend the  
 whole condition of the Gospel; a firm belief of the  
 doctrine of it, and the fruit and effect of this belief,  
 in a good conversation. And that *faith* here in the  
*text*, takes in a holy life, is evident from what fol-  
 lows,



lows, *whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation*; from whence it is evident, that the Apostle speaks of such a *faith*, as shews forth it self in a good *conversation*. SERM. XXIII.

So that we may very well suppose the Apostle here to recommend *the primitive faith* to our imitation in these *four* respects.

1. In regard of the *sincerity* and *purity* of it.
2. In regard of the *firmness* and *stability* of it.
3. Of their *constancy* and *perseverance* in it.
4. Of the *efficacy* and *fruitfulness* of it, in a good conversation. All these may be collected from the expressions and circumstances of the *text*.

1. We are to imitate these *primitive* patterns, in the *sincerity* and *purity* of their faith, I mean, that the faith which we profess, be the sincere doctrine of christianity, and the pure word of God, free from all mixture of human additions and inventions, and not made up, as the faith of the *Pharisees* was among the *Jews*, and theirs of the church of *Rome* is at this day, of the *word of God*, and the *doctrines and traditions of men*; not like the *creed* of pope *Pius IV.* (which is now the standard of the *Roman* faith) consisting of the twelve *old* Articles of the christian faith, delivered to us by Christ and his Apostles, and as many *new* ones, coined and stamped by their later Councils. This is not to follow the faith of the Apostles, and first patterns of christianity, the faith once delivered to the saints, as St. *Jude* calls it. This is to have our faith stand upon the authority of men, and not on the word of God; whereas we are to follow the faith of the first guides of the christian church, who spake unto them the word of God, as the Apostle expressly chargeth here in the *text*.

2. We are to imitate them, in the *stability* and *firmness* of our faith, and not suffer our selves to be shaken, and removed from it, by every wind of new doctrine; the faith of Christ being unchangeable, as Christ himself. And that by following the faith of

SER M. the primitive guides and teachers of christianity, the  
 XXIII. Apostle here means, that we should *be stedfast and*  
*unmovable* in it, is plain from what follows immediately after the text; *whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace, that is, in the doctrine of the Gospel, which is frequently called *the grace of God.*

3. We are to imitate them, in the *constancy* and *perseverance* of their faith; and that notwithstanding all the discountenance and opposition, the persecution and suffering which attend the profession of this faith; which the Apostle sufficiently intimates in this epistle, to have been the condition of those Christians, to whom he wrote; and therefore he proposeth so many examples to them, of constant and patient suffering for God and his truth; and it is probable enough, that the Apostle here recommends the example of those, who were the primitive *martyrs*, as well as teachers of christianity. He had before proposed to them the *living* examples of those, who were under actual persecution and sufferings for the Gospel, ver. 3. *Remember those that are in bonds, and those that suffer adversity;* and here in the seventh verse he seems to propose the pattern of those, who had laid down their lives and *died* for the faith; *Remember those who have been your guides, and have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,* τῶν ἐκείνων τῆς ἀναστροφῆς, which may be rendered, *the last act of their lives*, the manner of their going out of the world, perhaps by martyrdom; as if he had said, imitate them in their constancy and perseverance in the faith, even to the last, in laying down their lives for it. And thus we should be ready to do, if God calls us to it. However, it is certain the Apostle meant their constancy and perseverance in the faith to the last, and their dying in,

if not for the faith of Christ. And this is necessary, SERM.  
XXIII.  
if we expect *the crown of life*, and hope for the same happy end, which they had; for none but *they, that continue to the end, shall be saved.*

4. We should imitate them in the *efficacy* and *fruitfulness* of their faith, in the practice and virtues of a good life; *whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation*, that is, their perseverance in a *holy course* to the end. And these must never be separated; *a sound faith, and a good life.* Without this, *our faith is barren and dead*, as St. James tells us, chap. 2. ver. 17. Our knowledge and belief of the christian doctrine, must manifest itself in a good conversation. *Who is a wise man* says the same St. James, (cap. 3. ver. 13.) *Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works.* This is a faithful saying, faith St. Paul to Titus, chap. 3. ver. 8. *and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.*

And herein the apostles of our Lord and Saviour were eminent examples. They lived as they taught, and practised the doctrine which they preached. So St. Paul strictly chargeth Timothy, 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.* And our Saviour tells us, that hereby chiefly false prophets and teachers might be known from the true apostles of Christ, Matt. 7. 20. *By their fruits ye shall know them.* And indeed we do not follow the faith of those excellent persons, if we do not abound in all the fruits of righteousness, which by Jesus Christ, are to the praise and glory of God. I come now to the

Third and last thing I proposed, viz. the encouragement to this, from the consideration of the happy state of those persons, who are proposed to us for patterns, and the glorious reward which they are made partakers of in another world. *Considering the*



S E R M. *end of their conversation, in exultation, their egress, or departure*  
 XXIII. *parture* out of this life, into a blessed and glorious state, where they have received the crown and reward of their faith and patience, and pious conversation in this world; or else (which comes much to one) *considering the conclusion of their lives*, with what patience and comfort they left the world, and with what joyful assurance of the happy condition they were going to, and were to continue in for ever.

And this is a great encouragement to constancy and perseverance in faith and holiness, to see with what cheerfulness and comfort good men die, and with what a firm and steady persuasion of the happiness they are entering upon. For who would not be glad to leave the world, in that calmness and serenity of mind, and comfortable assurance of a blessed eternity? Bad men wish this, and are ready to say with *Balaam, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* But if we would have the comfort of *such a death*, we must live *such lives*, and imitate the faith and good conversation of those, whom we desire to resemble in the manner of their death, and to go into the same happy state that they are in after death. If we do not make their *lives* our pattern; we must not expect to be conformable to them, in the happy manner of their *death*. When we hear of the death of an eminent good man, we do not doubt but he is happy; and are confident, that he will meet with the reward of his piety and goodness in another world. If we believe this of him, let us endeavour to be like him; that we may attain the same happiness, which we believe him to be possessed of, and, as the apostle exhorts, chap. 6. 12. *Let us not be slothful; but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Let us shew the same diligence that they did; that we may have the same full assurance of hope unto the end, which they had.

The inference from this discourse, which I have made upon this argument, is, to shew what use we ought to make of these excellent examples, which are set before us, of the first founders and teachers of our religion, and what is the proper honour and respect, which we ought to pay to their memory: Not *invocation* and *adoration*; but a zealous *imitation* of their faith, and good conversation. The greatest honour we can do them, the most acceptable to God, the most grateful to them, and the most beneficial to ourselves, is to endeavour to be like them: Not to make any images, and likenesses of them, to fall down before them, and worship them; but to form the image of their faith and virtues upon our hearts and lives: Not to pray to them; but to praise God for such bright and glorious examples, and to endeavour with all our might to imitate their faith, and patience, and piety, and humility, and meekness, and charity, and all those other virtues which were so resplendent in them. And this is *to remember* the founders of our religion as we ought, *to follow their faith*, and *to consider the end of their conversation*.

Had the christian religion required, or intended any such thing, as of latter times hath been practised in the world; it had been as easy for the apostle to have said, *Remember them that have been your guides, and have spoken to you the word of God, to erect images to them, and to worship them with due veneration, and to pray to them and make use of their intercession*. But no such thing is said, or the least intimation given of it, either in this text, or any other in the whole bible; but very much to the contrary.

Their example indeed is frequently recommended to us, for our imitation and encouragement; and for this reason, the providence of God hath taken particular care, that the memory of the apostles, and so many primitive christians and martyrs, should be transmitted to posterity; that christians in all succeeding ages might propound these patterns to themselves,

S E R M. and have perpetually before their eyes the piety and  
 XXIII. virtue of their lives, and their patient and constant  
 sufferings for the truth; that when God shall please  
 to call us to the like trial, *we may not be wearied and faint in our minds; but being compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses, having so many examples in our eye of those, who through faith and patience inherit the promises, and do now as it were look down from their happy state upon us here below, who are combating with manifold temptations, to see how we behave and acquit ourselves in our christian course, we may take encouragement to ourselves, from such examples, and such spectators, to run with patience the race which is set before us.*

I know indeed that other use than this hath been, and is at this day made of the memory of the saints and martyrs of former ages, very dishonourable to God, and very grievous to them, if they be sensible of what is done here below; I mean to worship them, and to pray to them, and (to the great disparagement of the powerful intercession of *our great high-priest, Jesus the Son of God*) to make them the mediators and intercessors in heaven with God for us. Of this the scripture hath no where given us the least intimation; but hath expressly commanded the contrary, *to worship the Lord our God, and him only to serve; and to pray to him alone, in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator betwixt God and man.* Nor are there any footsteps of any such practice, in the primitive church, for the first three hundred years; as is acknowledged by our most learned adversaries of the church of *Rome*.

The scripture no where propounds the saints to us, for *objects of our worship*; but for *the patterns of our lives*. This is the greatest respect and veneration, that we can, or ought to pay to them; and whatever is beyond this, is *a voluntary humility*, injurious to God and our blessed Saviour, and most certainly displeasing to those, whom we pretend to honour; if they



they know how men play the fool about them here S E R M.  
below. XXIII.

Let us then endeavour to be like them, in the holy and virtuous actions of their lives, in their constant patience and suffering for the truth; if God shall call us thereto. And we may be like them, if we do but sincerely endeavour it, and pray to God for his grace and assistance to that end. For these examples were not left for our *admiration* only; but for our *imitation*. We frequently read the lives of the apostles and first founders of our religion: But I know not how it comes to pass, we chuse rather lazily to admire them, than vigorously to *follow* them; as if the piety of the first christians were *miraculous*, and not at all intended for the imitation of succeeding ages; as if heaven and earth, God and men, and all things were altered, since that time; as if christianity were then in its youthful age and vigour, but is since decayed, and grown old, and hath quite lost its power and virtue. And indeed the generality of christians live at such a faint and careless rate, as to make the world believe, that either all the stories of the primitive christians are fables; or else, that the force of christianity is strangely abated, and that the holy spirit of God hath forsaken the earth, and is retired to the father. But truth never grows old, and those laws of goodness and righteousness, which are contained in the gospel, are still as reasonable, and apt to gain upon the minds of men, as ever. God is the same he was, and our blessed Saviour is still at the right hand of God, interceding powerfully for sinners, for *mercy and grace to help in time of need*. The promises and threatenings of the gospel are still as true and powerful as ever; and the holy spirit of God is still in the world, and effectually works in them that believe.

Let us not then deceive our selves in this matter. The primitive Christians were *men like our selves, subject to the same passions that we are, and compassed about*

S E R M. *bout with the same infirmities* ; so that although that  
XXIII. extraordinary spirit and power of miracles, which

~~~~~ God endowed them withal, for the first planting and propagating of the Gospel in the world, be now ceased; yet the sanctifying power and virtue of God's holy Spirit, does still accompany the Gospel, and is ready to assist us in every good work.

In a word, we have all that, that is necessary to work the same graces and virtues in us, which were in them ; and if we be not slothful, and wanting to our selves, we may *follow their faith*, and at last *attain the end of it, even the salvation of our souls*.

Let us then, from an idle admiring of those excellent patterns, proceed to a vigorous imitation of them, and be so far from being discouraged by the excellency of them, as to make even *that* matter and ground of encouragement to our selves ; according to that of *Tertullian*, *Admonetur omnis ætas fieri posse, quod aliquando factum est* ; all ages to the end of the world may be convinced, that what hath been done, is possible to be done. There have been such holy and excellent persons in the world ; and therefore it is possible for men to be such.

Let us not then be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Since we are compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses ; let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking upon Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.

S E R M O N XXIV. Preach'd on All-Saints day.

The Encouragement to suffer for Christ ; and the Danger of denying him.

2 TIM. II. 11, 12.

It is a faithful saying ; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : If we suffer, we shall also reign with him : If we deny him, he also will deny us.

IN the beginning of this chapter, St. Paul encourages *Timothy* to continue stedfast in the profession of the Gospel, notwithstanding the sufferings which attended it ; ver. 1. *Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus ;* and ver. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.* And to animate him in his resolution, he quotes a saying, which it seems was well known and firmly believed among Christians ; a saying on the one hand full of encouragement to those who with patience and constancy suffered for their religion ; and on the other hand, full of terror to those who for fear of suffering denied it.

It is a faithful saying. This is a preface used by this Apostle, to introduce some remarkable sentence, of more than ordinary weight and concernment ; 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners :* and chap. 4, 8, 9. *Godliness is profitable*

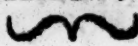
S E R M. ble unto all things, having a promise of the life that now
 XXIV. is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful
 saying, and worthy of all acceptation, Titus 3. 8. This
 is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou
 affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God,
 might be careful to maintain good works. And here in
 the text, the same preface is used to signify the impor-
 tance of the saying he was about to mention ; It is a
 faithful saying ; If we be dead with him, we shall also
 live with him : If we suffer, we shall also reign with
 him : If we deny him, he also will deny us.

The first two sentences are matter of encourage-
 ment to those who suffer with Christ, and for him,
 and are the very same in sense. *If we be dead with
 him*, that is, if we lay down our lives for the testimo-
 ny of truth, as he did, *we shall also live with him*,
 that is, we shall in like manner be made partakers
 of immortality, as he is : *If we suffer* or endure as
 he did, *we shall also reign with him* in glory.

The other sentence is matter of terror to those who
 deny him and his truth. *If we deny him, he also
 will deny us* ; to which is subjoyned another saying
 much to the same sense ; *if we believe not, if we be
 unfaithful ; yet he remaineth faithful, he
 cannot deny himself* ; that is, he will be as good as
 his word, and make good that solemn threatening
 which he hath denounced against those, who shall for
 fear of suffering deny him, and his truth.

The words being thus explained, I shall begin
 with the first part of this remarkable saying ; *If we
 be dead with him, we shall also live with him : If we
 suffer, we shall also reign with him*. This, it seems,
 was a noted saying among Christians ; and whether
 they had it by tradition of our Saviour, or whether
 it was in familiar use among the Apostles, as a very
 proper and powerful argument to keep Christians
 stedfast to their religion, I cannot determine. It is
 certain, that sayings to this sense are very frequent,
 especially in the epistles of St. Paul. Rom. 6. 5.

For

For if we have been planted together in the likeness SERM.
of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his XXIV.
resurrection. And ver. 8. Now if we be dead with 

Christ; we believe that we shall also live with him.
2 Cor. 4. 10. Always bearing about in the body, the
dying of our Lord Jesus; that the life also of Jesus
might be made manifest in our body. And ver. 18.
For we which live, are always delivered unto death
for Jesus sake; that the life also of Jesus might be
made manifest in our mortal flesh. And Rom. 8. 17.
If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be al-
so glorified together. Phil. 3. 10, 11. That I may
know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the
fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable
unto his death: If by any means I might attain unto
the resurrection of the dead, 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13. Be-
loved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial,
which is to try you, as though some strange thing
happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are
partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory
shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding
joy.

You see that the sense of this saying was in fre-
quent use among the Apostles, as a powerful argu-
ment to encourage Christians to constancy in their re-
ligion, notwithstanding the dangers and sufferings
which attended it. *This is a faithful saying: If we
be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we
suffer, we shall also reign with him.*

And the force of this argument will best appear,
by taking into consideration these *two* things;

I. What virtue there is in a firm belief and per-
suasion of a blessed immortality in another world, to
support and bear up mens spirits under the greatest
sufferings for righteousness sake; and even to animate
them, if God shall call them to it, to lay down their
lives for their religion.

II. How it may be made out to be reasonable, for
men to embrace and voluntarily to submit to present
and

S E R M. and grievous sufferings, in hopes of a future happiness and reward; concerning which we have not, nor perhaps are capable of having, the same degree of certainty and assurance which we have of the evils and sufferings of this present life.

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I. What virtue there is in a firm belief and persuasion of a blessed immortality in another world, to support and bear up men's spirits, under the greatest sufferings for righteousness sake; and even to animate them, if God shall call them to it, to lay down their lives for their religion.

If men do firmly believe that they shall change this temporal and miserable life for an endless state of happiness and glory, that they shall meet with a reward of their sufferings infinitely beyond the proportion of them, both in the weight and duration of it; this must needs turn the scales on that side, on which there is the greatest weight: And there is a sufficient ground for a firm belief of this. For if any thing can certainly be concluded from the providence of God, this may, that good men shall be happy one time or other: And because they are very often great sufferers in this life; that there is another state remains for them after this life, wherein they shall meet with a full reward of all their sufferings for righteousness sake.

But besides the reasonableness of this, from the consideration of God's providence, we have now a clear and express revelation of it; *life and immortality being brought to light by the Gospel.* This St. John tells us is *the great promise* of the Gospel, 1 John 2. 25. *This is the promise which he hath promised us; even eternal life.* And this promise, our Saviour most expressly makes to those who suffer for him: Matth. 5. 10, 11, 12. *Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoice, and be exceeding*

exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven. SERM.
Mark 10. 29, 30. *Verily I say unto you, there is* XXIV.
no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters,
or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands
for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an
hundred fold now in this time, with persecutions,
(that is, so far as a state of persecution would admit)
and in the world to come eternal life.

And if such a persuasion be firmly fixed in our minds ; the faith of another world, and the assured hope of eternal life and happiness, must needs have a mighty force and efficacy upon the minds of sober and considerate men ; because there is no proportion between suffering for a little while, and being unspeakably and eternally happy. So St. Paul tells us he calculated the matter, *Rom. 8. 18. I reckon (says he) that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* The vast disproportion between the sufferings of a few days, and the joys and glory of eternity, when it is once firmly believed by us, will weigh down all the evils and calamities of this world, and give us courage and constancy under them. For why should we faint, if we believe that *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?* as the same St. Paul assures us, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* If our minds be but thoroughly possessed with the hopes of a resurrection to a better and happier life ; this will make death, attended even with extremity of terror, to be tolerable ; as we read of some, in that long catalogue of saints and martyrs, *Heb. 11. 35. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.* It would make a man to rejoice in the ruin and dissolution of *this earthly tabernacle*, to be assured that *when it is dissolved, we shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* as the same Apostle assures us, *2 Cor. 5. 1.* Thus you see what virtue there is in the firm belief and persuasion
of

SERM. of a better life, to bear up men's spirits under those
 XXIV. sufferings and torments which may seem *unsupportable*
 to human nature.

And *so* indeed they would *be*, without an extraordinary grace and assistance of God to enable them to bear those sufferings, which his providence permits them to be exercised withal. But of *this extraordinary grace*, we are assured, not only from the consideration of the attributes and providence of God; but likewise from the express promises and declarations of his word.

The attributes of God and his providence give us good ground to believe that *he* who loves goodness and righteousness, and hath a peculiar favour and regard for good men, will never suffer his faithful friends and servants to be brought into that distress for righteousness sake, that they shall not be able to endure those evils and afflictions which befall them upon that account: And if in the course of his providence, any thing happen to them that is above the ordinary constancy and patience of human nature to bear, that in such a case God will extraordinarily interpose, and give them strength and patience, support and comfort, proportionable to the evils and sufferings that are upon them; and that he will either lighten their burthen, or add to their strength; he will either mitigate their pain, or increase their patience; either he will check and restrain the effect of natural causes, as in the case of the *three children*, that were in the fiery furnace; and of *Daniel*, who was cast into the den of lions: or else (which comes to the same issue) if he will suffer causes to have their natural course, he will afford supernatural comforts to balance the fury and extremity of them. This is very credible, from the meer consideration of God's goodness, and of the particular care and favour of his providence towards good men.

But besides *this*, we have the express promise and declaration of God's word to this purpose, which puts us out of all doubt concerning that which we had good reason to hope and expect before, 1 Cor. 10. 13. St. Paul

Paul there tells the Christians at *Corinth*, that though they had met with some troubles, yet they had not been tried with the extremity of suffering; but when that should happen, they had no cause to doubt, but God would enable them to bear it. *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man*; that is, you have not yet been exercised with any trial, but what is human; what the ordinary strength and resolution of human nature is able to bear; but in case it should come to extreme suffering, and that they must either comply with the heathen idolatry, or endure extremity of torments; they had the promise of God's help to support them in that case. *God is faithful*, says he, *who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*; and then it follows, *wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry*; that is, let no suffering that you are tempted withal, make you guilty of *this sin*. And *1 Pet. 4. 14*, the presence of God's spirit, in a very glorious manner, for our support and comfort, is promised to those who suffer for him. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*.

And *this* consideration of God's strength to support us under suffering, makes the *other*, of the reward of them, a perfect and compleat encouragement; which it could not be, without it. For if, upon the whole matter, the present sufferings of good men were intolerable, and human nature were not divinely assisted to bear them; how great soever the future reward promised to them should be; they that lay under them, would be forced to consult their own present ease and deliverance. I proceed to the

II. Thing I proposed to consider, namely, how it may be made out to be reasonable to embrace and voluntarily to submit to present and grievous sufferings, in hopes of future happiness and reward; concerning which we have not, nor perhaps are capable

S E R M. of having, the same degree of certainty and assurance,
 XXIV. which we have of the evils and sufferings of this present life.

Now, granting that we have not the same degree of certainty concerning our future happiness, that we have of our present sufferings, which we feel, or see just ready to come upon us ; yet prudence making it necessary for men to run this hazard, does justify the reasonableness of it. This I take to be a *known and ruled case* in the common affairs of life, and in matters of temporal concernment ; and men act upon this principle every day. The husbandman parts with his corn, and casts it into the earth, in confidence that it will spring up again, and at the time of harvest bring him in a considerable return and advantage. He parts with a certainty, in hope only of a great future benefit ; and though he have no demonstration, for the infallible success of his labour and hazard ; yet he acts very reasonably ; because if he does not take this course he runs a greater and more certain hazard, of perishing by famine at last, when his present stock is spent. The case of the merchant is the same, who parts with a present estate, in hopes of a future improvement ; which yet is not so certain as what he parts withal.

And if this be reasonable in *these* cases ; then the hazard which men run, upon much greater assurance than either the husbandman or the merchant hath, is much more reasonable. When we part with this life in hopes of one infinitely better, that is, in *sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life* ; and when we submit to present sufferings, to avoid an eternity of misery, which is much more to be dreaded than temporal want, this is reasonable ; because here is a much greater advantage in view, and a more pressing necessity in the case ; nothing being so desirable to one that must live for ever, as to be happy for ever ; and nothing to be avoided by him with so much care, as everlasting misery and ruin. And for our security of obtaining the one, and escaping the other, we have *the promise*

mise of God, who cannot lie; which is all the certainty and security that things future and invisible are capable of. S E R M.
XXIV.

Nay, I will go lower. If God had made no express promise and declaration of a future happiness and reward, to those that serve him and suffer for him; yet if any man out of a sincere love to God, and awful regard to his laws, endure trouble and affliction, if there be a God and providence, this is assurance enough to us, that our services and sufferings shall one time or other be considered and rewarded. For as sure as any man is, that there is a God, and that his providence regards the actions of men; so sure are we that no man shall finally be a loser by any thing that he doth or suffers for him.

So that the matter is now brought to this plain issue, that if it be reasonable to believe there is a God, and that his providence regards and considers the actions of men; it is also reasonable to endure present sufferings, in hope of a future reward; and there is certainly enough in this case, to govern and determine a prudent man, that is in any good measure persuaded of another life after this, and hath any tolerable consideration of, and regard to his eternal interest.

Indeed, if we were sure, that there were no life after this; if we had no expectation of a happiness or misery beyond this world; the wisest thing that any man could do, would be to enjoy as much of the present contentments and satisfactions of this world, as he could fairly come at. For *if there be no resurrection to another life*, the Apostle allows the reason of the *Epicure* to be very good, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*. But on the other hand, if it be true that we are designed for immortality, and that another state remains for us after this life, wherein we shall be unspeakably happy, or intolerably and eternally miserable, according as we have behaved ourselves in this world; it is then evidently reasonable, that men should take the greatest care of the longest duration, and be content to bear, and dispense with

S E R M. some present trouble and inconvenience, for a felicity
 XXIV. that will have no end ; and be willing to labour and
 take pains, and deny our present ease and comfort
 for a little while, that we may be happy for ever.
 This is reckoned prudence in the account of this
 world, for a man to part with a present possession
 and enjoyment, for a much greater advantage in re-
 version : But surely the disproportion between *time*
 and *eternity* is *so vast*, that did men but firmly be-
 lieve that they shall *live for ever*, nothing in this
 world could reasonably be thought too good to part
 withal, or too grievous to suffer, for the obtaining of
 a blessed immortality.

In the virtue of this belief and persuasion, the pri-
 mitive Christians were fortified, against all that the
 malice and cruelty of the world could do against
 them ; and they thought they made a very wise bar-
 gain, if *through many tribulations they might at last*
enter into the kingdom of God ; because they be-
 lieved, that the joys of heaven would abundantly re-
 compence all their sorrows and sufferings upon earth.
 And so confident were they of this, that they looked
 upon it as a special favour and regard of God to
 them, to call them to suffer for his name. So St.
Paul speaks of it, *Phil. 1. 29. Unto you it is given,*
on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,
but also to suffer for his sake. Yea, they accounted
 them happy, who upon this account were miserable
 in this world. So St. *James* expressly pronounceth
 them, *Jam. 1. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth*
temptation ; (meaning the temptation of persecution
 and suffering) *for when he is tried, he shall receive*
the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to
them that love him. And this consideration was that,
 which kept up their spirits from sinking under the
 weight of their greatest sufferings. So St. *Paul* tells
 us, *2 Cor. 4. 14, 16. Knowing that he which raised*
up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus.
For which cause we faint not ; but though our out-
ward

ward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. The sufferings of their bodies, did but help to raise and fortify their spirits: nay, so far were they from fainting under those afflictions, that they rejoiced and gloried in them. So the same Apostle tells us, *Rom. 5. 2, 3.* that in the midst of their sufferings, they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God; and that they gloried in tribulations, as being the way to be made partakers of that glory: And *Heb. 10. 34.* That they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. And for this reason, *St. James, chap. 1. 2.* exhorts Christians to account it all joy, when they fall into divers temptations; (that is various kind of sufferings) because of the manifold advantages which from thence would redound to them.

Now what was it that inspired them to all this courage and chearfulness, but the belief of a mighty reward, far beyond the proportion of all their sufferings, and a firm persuasion that they should be vast gainers by them at the last? This consideration *St. Paul* urgeth with great force, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.* Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: whilst we look not at the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal. If we could compare things justly, and attentively regard and consider the invisible glories of another world, as well as the things which are seen; we should easily perceive, that he who suffers for God and religion, does not renounce happiness; but puts it out to interest, upon terms of the greatest advantage.

I shall now speak briefly to the

Second part of this remarkable saying in the text; If we deny him, he also will deny us: To which is

S E R M. subjoined in the words following, *if we believe not ;*
 XXIV. *αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν*, *if we deal unfaithfully with him ; yet he*
 ~~~~~ *abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself ; that is, he*  
*will be constant to his word, and make good that*  
*solemn threatening which he hath denounced against*  
*those, who for fear of suffering shall deny him and*  
*his truth before men, Matth. 10. 33. Whosoever*  
*(saith our Lord there) shall deny me before men, him*  
*will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,*  
*Mark 8. 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed*  
*of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sin-*  
*ful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be*  
*ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father,*  
*with the holy Angels. This is a terrible threatening,*  
*to be disowned by Christ at the day of judgment, in*  
*the presence of God and his holy Angels ; and this*  
*threatening will certainly be made good ; and though*  
*we may renounce him, and break our faith with him,*  
*yet he remains faithful, who hath threatened, and*  
*cannot deny himself.*

This is matter of great terror, and seriously to be thought upon by those who are tempted to deny Christ and his truth, either by the hope of worldly advantage, or the fear of temporal sufferings. What worldly advantage can we propose to ourselves, by quitting our religion, which can be thought an equal price, for the loss of our immortal souls, and the happiness of all eternity ? Suppose the whole world were offered us in consideration ; yet *what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* as our Saviour reasons, *Matth. 16. 26.*

And on the other hand, if the fear of temporal suffering be such a terror to men, as to shake their constancy in religion, and to tempt them to renounce it ; the fear of eternal torments ought to be much more powerful, to keep them stedfast to their religion, and to deter them from the denial of it. If fear will move us ; then in all reason, that which is  
 most

most terrible ought to prevail most with us, and the greatest danger should be most dreaded by us, according to our Saviour's most friendly and reasonable advice, Luke 12. 4, 5. *I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear. Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* If there can be no doubt which of them is most to be dreaded; there can be no doubt what we are to do, in case of such a temptation.

I shall now draw some *inferences* from this discourse by way of application.

*First, If this be a faithful saying, that if we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; but if we deny him, he will also deny us; the belief of it ought to have a mighty influence upon us, to make us stedfast and unmoveable in the profession and practice of our holy religion. This inference the Apostle makes from the doctrine of a blessed resurrection, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. If any thing will fix men in the profession of their religion, and make them serious in the practice of it; the belief of a glorious resurrection, and of the reward which God will then give to his faithful servants, must needs have a very powerful influence upon them to this purpose. Upon the same ground the Apostle to the Hebrews exhorts them to hold fast the profession of their faith, without wavering; because he is faithful that hath promised. If we be constant in the profession and practice of our holy religion; God will be faithful to the promise which he hath made of eternal life to those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality.*



S E R M. If under the dark and imperfect dispensation of  
 XXIV. *the law*, good men shewed so much courage and constancy for God and religion, as we read in that long catalogue of heroes, *Heb. 11.* how much more should *Christians*, whose faith is supported much more strongly than *theirs* was, by a much clearer evidence of another life, and a blessed immortality, than *they* had; by more expresse promises of divine comfort and assistance under sufferings, than were made to *them*; and by the most divine and encouraging example, of the greatest patience under the greatest sufferings, that the world ever had, in the death and passion of the Son of God, *who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God?* When we consider this glorious example of suffering, and the glorious reward of it, how can we *be weary and faint in our minds!* If the saints and Apostles of the Old Testament did such great things, by virtue of a faith, which relied chiefly upon the attributes and providence of God; what should not *we* do, who have the security of God's expresse promise for our comfort and encouragement! *We* certainly have much greater reason to take up our cross more chearfully, and to bear it more patiently, than they did.

*Secondly,* We should always be prepared in the resolutions of our minds, to suffer for the testimony of God's truth and a good conscience, if it should please God at any time to call us to it. This our Saviour hath made a necessary condition of his religion, and a qualification of a true disciple. *If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me.* So that we are to reckon upon it, and to prepare for it; that if it comes, we may not be surprised, *as if some strange thing had happened to us*; and may not be unresolved what to do in such a case. And God knows when we may be called to it: however it is wise, to forecast it in our minds, and to be  
 always

always in a preparation and readiness to entertain the S E R M.  
worst that may happen, that if it come, we may be XXIV.  
*able to stand out in an evil day*; and if it does not  
come, God will accept the resolution of our minds,  
and reward it according to the sincerity of it: he that  
knows what we would have done, will consider it,  
as if we had done it.

*Thirdly*, The less we are called *to suffer* for God,  
the more we should think ourselves obliged *to do* for  
him; the less God is pleased to exercise our *patience*,  
we should abound so much the more in the *active*  
*virtues* of a good life; and our obedience to God  
should be so much the more chearful, and we more  
*fruitful in every good work*. If there be no need of  
*sealing* the truth with our *blood*, we should be sure to  
*adorn* and recommend it by our *lives*.

*Fourthly* and *lastly*, If the hopes of immortality  
will bear men up under the extremity of suffering and  
torments, and give men courage and resolution against  
all the *terrors* of the world: they ought much more  
to make us victorious over the *temptations* and *allure-*  
*ments* of it. For certainly it is in reason much easier  
*to forego pleasure*, than *to endure pain*; *to refuse or lay*  
*down a good place* for the testimony of a good con-  
science, than *to lay down our lives* upon that account.  
And in vain does any man pretend that he will be a  
*martyr* for his religion, when he will not *rule an ap-*  
*petite*, nor *restrain a lust*, nor *subdue a passion*, nor  
*cross his covetousness and ambition*, for the sake of it,  
and in hope of *that eternal life*, which God, that cannot  
lye, hath promised. He that refuseth to do *the less*, is  
not like to do *the greater*. It is very improbable,  
that a man will *die for his religion*, when he cannot be  
persuaded *to live according to it*. So that by this we  
may try the sincerity of our resolution concerning  
*martyrdom*. For what profession soever men make,  
he that will not *deny himself* the pleasures of sin, and  
the advantages of this world, for Christ; when it  
comes to the push, will never have the heart *to take*  
up

*up his cross, and follow him.* He that cannot take up a resolution to live a saint, hath a demonstration within himself, that he is never like to die a martyr.

## S E R M O N XXV.

*Preached on  
All Saints  
Day.*

The Blessedness of Good Men, after Death.

REV. xiv. 13.

*And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Ye, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

S E R M.  
XXV.

**I** Will not trouble you with any nice dispute about the author of this book of the *Revelation*, or the authority of it: though both these were sometime controverted; because it is now many ages since this book was received into the *Canon* of the scriptures, as of *divine authority*, and as written by *St. John*. Nor shall I at this time enquire into the particular meaning of the several *visions* and *predictions* contained in it. It is confessedly, in several parts of it, a very obscure book: and there needs no other argument to satisfy us that it is so, than that so many learned and inquisitive persons, have given such different interpretations of several remarkable passages in it; as particularly concerning *the slaying of the two witnesses*, and *the number of the beast*.

The



The words which I have read to you, though SERM.  
there be some difficulty about the interpretation of XXV.  
some particular expressions in them; yet in the ge-  
neral sense and intendment of them, they are very  
plain, being a solemn declaration of *the blessed state of*  
*good men after this life.*

And that we may take the more notice of them, they are brought in with a great deal of solemn preparation and address, as it were on purpose to bespeak our attention to them: *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.* And for the greater confirmation of them, the special testimony of *the Spirit* is added to *the voice from heaven*, declaring the reason why they *that die in the Lord* are pronounced to be in so happy a condition: *Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

In the handling of these words, I shall *first* enquire into the particular sense and meaning of them.

*Secondly*, Prosecute the general intendment of them, which I told you is to declare to us, *the blessed state of those that die in the Lord* (that is) of saints and good men after they are departed this life.

*First*, I shall enquire into the particular sense and meaning of the words. To the clearing of which, nothing will conduce more, than to consider the occasion of them, which was briefly this. In the *visions* of this and the foregoing chapter, is represented to *St. John*, the great straits that the Christians, the true worshippers of the true God, should be reduced to. On the one hand, they are threatened with death; or if they be suffered to live, they are interdicted all commerce with human society, chap. 13. 15. *And he had power to cause, that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed:* And, ver. 17. *That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark of the beast.* And on the other hand, they that do worship the beast are threatned with  
damnation,

S E R M. damnation, chap. 14. 9, 10. *If any man do worship the beast, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone.* So that whenever this should happen, it would be a time of great trial to the sincere Christians, being threatned with *extreme persecution* on the one hand, and *eternal damnation* on the other; and therefore it is added in the 12th verse, *here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* This is represented in St. John's visions, as the last and extreamest persecution of the true worshippers of God, and which should precede the final downfall of *Babylon*. And when this should happen, then he tells us, *the patience of the saints* would be tried to purpose, and then it would be seen, who are *faithful* to God, and *constant* to his truth; and upon this immediately follows *the voice from heaven* in the text; *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

The main difficulty of the words, depends upon the word ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, *from henceforth*; which interpreters do variously refer to several parts of the text. Some by changing the accent, and reading it, ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, would change the signification of the word into *omnino*; *omnino beati sunt, they are altogether blessed, very happy, who die in the Lord.* But this is altogether destitute of the countenance and warrant of any ancient copy. We will then suppose that the word is ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, and to be rendered as we translate it, *from henceforth, from this time.* All the difficulty is, to what part of the text we are to refer it. Some refer it to the word *blessed*; *Blessed from henceforth are the dead which die in the Lord*: As if from this time, and not before, the souls of good men were, immediately after death, admitted into heaven, which many of the ancient fathers thought, the souls of good men who died be-  
fore

fore the coming of Christ, were not. But then this **S E R M.** blessedness ought to have been dated, not from the **XXV.** time of St. John's vision, but of Christ's ascension; according to that of St. Ambrose; in the hymn called *Te Deum*; *When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.*

Others refer it to *dying in the Lord*. *Blessed are the dead, that from henceforth die in the Lord*. But this hath no peculiar emphasis in it; because they were *blessed, that died in the Lord*, before that time.

Others refer it to the words following, concerning the testimony of the Spirit; *yea, from henceforth saith the spirit*. All these varieties agree in this sense in general; that some special blessedness is promised and declared to those who should die after that time: but what that is in particular, is not easy to make out.

But the most plain and simple interpretation, and that which seems to be most suitable to the occasion of these words, is this; that the word *from henceforth*, is to be referred to the whole sentence, thus; *from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*; as if St. John had said, considering the extremity and cruel circumstances of *this last and severe persecution*, we may from that time forward reckon those, who are already dead (supposing that *they died in the Lord*) to be very happy; in that they did not live to see and suffer those things, which will then befall the faithful servants of God, when *the devil shall come, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time*. Much in the same sense as Solomon, when he considered the oppressions that were done under the sun, says Eccl. 4. 2. that he praised the dead, which were already dead; more than the living, which were yet alive; that is, considering the oppressions which were so frequent in the world, he reckoned those happier that were out of it, than those who still lived in it.

And



SERM. And as this is very agreeable to the scope of what  
 XXV. goes before, so it suits very well with what follows  
 after, as the reason, why those persons are declared  
 to be so happy; yea, *saieth the Spirit, that they may  
 rest from their labours; and their works do follow  
 them*; that is, that they may be at an end of their  
 troubles and sufferings; and may not be tryed be-  
 yond their strength and patience, under *that terrible  
 persecution* which will reign at that time; and like-  
 wise that they may receive the reward of all the good  
 they have done, and the evils they have suffered in  
 this world; in the very same sense, that *the righ-  
 teous* are said to be *taken away from the evil to come*,  
 Esai. 57. 1, 2. *The righteous is taken away from  
 the evil to come, he shall enter into peace: they  
 shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his up-  
 rightness*; that is, enjoying the comfort of his inte-  
 grity and sincerity towards God.

And now the main difficulty being over, we shall  
 need to trouble our selves the less about the other ex-  
 pressions in the *text*: Yet there are *two* which I  
 shall a little explain to you.

1. What is here meant by *dying in the Lord*. And  
 this sort of phrase, *in the Lord, in Christ, and in  
 the name of Christ*, is used in scripture very variou-  
 sly. In general it signifies, *the doing or suffering any  
 thing, with relation to Christ, and upon his account*;  
 and so *to die in the Lord*, doth most frequently signi-  
 fy *to die in the faith of Christ, and the profession of  
 the christian religion*. Sometimes it signifies *to die  
 for his cause, and to bear testimony to his truth*,  
 which is therefore called *martyrdom*, as St. Paul is  
 said to be *διὰ τοῦ κυρίου*, Eph. 4. 1. *a prisoner in  
 the Lord*; that is, *for his cause*. So likewise, St.  
 Peter; *if you be reproached διὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἐνεκα*, *in the  
 name of Christ; happy are ye*: And 'tis probable,  
 that the expression, 1 Cor. 15. 18. *Then they also  
 which are fallen asleep in Christ*, is to be understood,  
 of those that died for his cause; because it follows  
 im.

immediately, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable; that is, considering how much Christians suffered for him in this life, they were in a most miserable condition, if there were nothing to be expected beyond it; but especially if we consider the parallel phrase, 1 Theff. 4. 14. *So them also that sleep in Jesus, for Jesus sake; that is, them that have suffered martyrdom for him, will God bring with him.* And in this sense, many understand the phrase in the text, as spoken of martyrs; *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; that is, for his cause.* And tho' I think the phrase may well enough be understood more generally, yet I shall not reject this sense: because it is not unsuitable to the scope and occasion of the words. For considering *that last and extreme persecution* which he had described; it was not altogether improper to pronounce those happy, that had suffered martyrdom already, and were taken away from those dreadful calamities, which in these last days of *Antichrist* were to fall upon the faithful servants of Christ.

The other expression is the last in the text, *and their works do follow them.* So we render the word ἀκολουθεῖ, which yet does most properly signify *to accompany*, or *go along with one*; and so indeed the expression will rather be more emphatical, *they rest from their labours, and their works accompany them.*

But whether the word be render'd, *to follow*, or *to accompany*, the difference is not very material.

Thus you see what the particular sense and meaning of the words probably is, *to declare the happy estate of those saints or martyrs, who were already dead, in and for the faith of Christ; and should not live to see those cruel and fearful sufferings, which should afterwards come upon the Christians.* But then this is grounded upon that general truth, that *they are happy that die in the Lord.* And this is that which I intend now to prosecute, abstracting from the

S E R M. the particular occasion, upon which these words were  
XXV. spoken ; which brings me to the

Second thing I propounded, and chiefly designed to handle upon the occasion of *this day* ; namely, *the happy estate of good men after they have departed out of this life.* And in speaking to this, I shall confine myself to *two* particulars, which the *text* mentions, as the reasons and grounds, why *they that die in the Lord*, are declared to be in so *blessed* a condition ; *yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

1. Good men, when they are departed this life, are freed from all the labours and pains they were exercised with in this world : *that they may rest from their labours.*

2. They reap the comfort and reward of all the good which they have done in this world : *and their works do follow them*, or rather, *go along with them*, to receive the reward which God hath promised to *them*, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality.

1. Those who die in the Lord, are freed from the evils and miseries of this life. And this is so great a felicity, that some (and those who think themselves no small philosophers) have placed the chief happiness of man in freedom from pain and trouble. But tho' happiness do not consist in this alone ; yet it cannot be denied to be a great part of it : For though some have been so phantastically obstinate, as, against the reason and common sense of mankind, to maintain this Paradox, that *a wise man may be as happy upon the rack, or in Phalaris his bull, as in the greatest ease and freedom from pain that can be imagined* ; yet nature cries shame of this hypocrisy ; and there are none of those *wise men* they speak of, were ever *such fools* as to try the experiment, and to shew by their actions, that it was indifferent to them, whether they laid themselves down upon their beds every night ; or were stretched upon a rack ; which yet ought to have



have been indifferent to them, had they believed S E R M. themselves, and really esteemed that, which others XXV. account *pain*, to be as happy a condition, as that  which is commonly called *ease*.

But we need not trouble ourselves to confute so stupid a principle, which is confuted by *nature*, and by every man's *sense* and *experience*. I think we may take it for granted, that freedom from misery is a very considerable part of happiness; otherwise *heaven* and *hell*, if we consider only the torment of it, would be all one. But certainly it is no small endearment of religion, to the common sense of mankind, that it promiseth to us in the next life, a freedom from all the evils and troubles of this. And by *this* the happiness of heaven is frequently described to us in scripture. *Esai.* 57. 2. speaking of *the righteous man*; *he shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.* 2 *Thes.* 1. 7. where the apostle speaking of the reward of those, who should suffer persecution for religion, *it is a righteous thing with God* (says he) *to recompense to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels.* And the apostle to the *Hebrews* frequently describes the happiness of Christians by *entering into rest*. And *Rev.* 21, 4. the state of the *new Jerusalem* is set forth to us, by deliverance from those troubles and sorrows, which men are subject to in this world; *and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are past away.*

Thus it is with us in this world, we are liable to *sorrow* and *pain* and *death*: But when we are once got to heaven, none of *these* things shall approach us. *The former things are passed away*, that is, the evils we formerly endured, are past and over, and shall never return to afflict us any more.

And is not this a great comfort, when we are labouring under the evils of this life, and conflicting

S E R M. forely with the miseries of it; that we shall one day  
 XXV. be past all these, and find a safe refuge and retreat  
 from all these storms and tempests: When we are  
 loaded with afflictions, and even tired with the bur-  
 den of them, and ready to faint and sink under it;  
 to think that *there remains a rest for us into which we*  
*shall shortly enter?* How can it chuse but be a mighty  
 consolation to us, whilst we are in this *vale of tears*  
*and troubles*, to be assured that the time is coming,  
 when *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and*  
*there shall be no more sorrow nor crying?*

There are none of us, but are obnoxious to any of  
 the evils of this life; we feel some of them, and  
 we fear more: Our outward condition, it may be, is  
 uncomfortable, we are poor and persecuted; we are  
 destitute of friends, or have many enemies; we are  
 despoiled of many of those comforts and enjoyments  
 which we once had: Our bodies perhaps are in pain,  
 or our spirits troubled; or though we have no real  
 cause of outward trouble, yet our souls are ill lodg-  
 ed, in the dark dungeon of a body overpowered with  
 a melancholy humour, which keeps out all light and  
 comfort from our minds.

And is it no reviving to us, to think of *that happy*  
*hour*, when we shall find a remedy and redress of all  
 these evils at once; of *that blessed place*, where we  
 shall take sanctuary, from all those afflictions and  
 troubles which pursued us in this world; where sorrow,  
 and misery, and death are perfect strangers, and into  
 which nothing that can render men in the least un-  
 happy, can ever enter? where our souls shall be in  
 perfect rest and contentment, and our bodies after a  
 while shall be restored and reunited to our souls; not  
 to cloud and clog them as they do here, but so hap-  
 pily changed, and refined to such a perfection, that  
 they shall be so far from giving any disturbance to our  
 minds, that they shall mightily add to their pleasure  
 and happiness.

And

And when we are once landed in those blessed regions, what a comfort will it be to us, to stand on the shore, and look back upon those rough and dangerous seas, which we have escaped? How pleasant to consider the manifold evils and calamities which we are freed from, and for ever secured against? To remember our past labours and sufferings, and to be able to defie all those temptations, which were wont to assault us in this world, with so much violence, and with too much success?

S E R M.  
XXV.  


And this is the condition of the blessed spirits above. They find a perfect cessation of all afflictions and troubles, *they rest from their labours*. But this is not all: For,

2. They are not only freed from all the evils and sufferings they were exercised withal in this world; but they shall receive a plentiful reward of all the good they have done in it; *their works do accompany them*. When pious souls go out of this world, they do not only leave all the evils of the world behind them; but they carry along with them all the good they have done, to reap there the comfort and reward of it. Just as, on the other hand, wicked men when they die, leave all the good things of this world, all the pleasures and enjoyments behind them; but the guilt and remorse of their wicked lives accompany them, and stick close to them, to torment them there, and that there they may be tormented for them.

Thus the scriptures represent to us the different condition of good and bad men, *Esai. 3. 10, 11. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him*. Which is many times true in *this* world; but however that happen, will most certainly and remarkably be made good in *the other*. And this is most emphatically exprest to us, in the parable of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*, *Luke 16. 25.* where the *rich man* petitions *Abraham* for some ease,



S E R M. and *Abraham* returns him this answer ; Son, remem-  
 XXV. ber that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things,  
 and likewise *Lazarus* evil things ; but now he is comfort-  
 ed, and thou art tormented. What a change was here!  
 How comfortable to the one, and how dismal to the  
 other ! *Lazarus* found rest from all his labours and suf-  
 ferings, and his piety and patience accompanied him  
 into the other world, and conveyed him into *Abra-*  
*ham's* bosom. Whereas the rich man was parted from  
 all his good things, and the guilt of his sins went along  
 with him, and lodged him in the place of torment.

But my text confines me to the bright side of this  
 prospect ; the consideration of that glorious recom-  
 pense which good men shall receive, for the good  
 works which they have done in this world. Indeed  
 the text doth not expressly say, that *their works shall*  
*be rewarded*, but that *they shall go along with them*, and  
 that they are *blessed* upon this account ; and this im-  
 plies that *they shall receive a sure reward*. For as the  
 Apostle reasons, *God is not unrighteous to forget our*  
*work and labour of love*. Verily there is a reward for  
 the righteous, as sure as there is a God that judgeth in  
 the earth.

But how great and glorious *that shall be*, I am not  
 in any measure able to declare to you. It may suffice,  
 that the scripture hath assured us in general, that God  
 is the rewarder of good men, and that he will make  
 them happy, not according to what can now enter  
 into our narrow thoughts, but according to the exceed-  
 ing greatness of his power and goodness. If we are to  
 receive our reward from God, we need not doubt, but  
 it will be very large, and such as is every way worthy  
 of him to bestow. For he is a great King, and of  
 great goodness ; and we may safely refer our selves to  
 him, in confidence that he will consider us, not ac-  
 cording to the meanness of our service, but according  
 to the vastness of his treasures, and the infinite boun-  
 ty of his mind. If he hath promised to make us  
 happy, tho' he hath not particularly declared to us,  
 wherein

wherein this happiness shall consist; yet we may S E R M. trust him that made us, to find out ways to make us XXV. happy; and may believe, that he who made us  without our knowledge or desire is able to make us happy beyond them both.

Only for the greater encouragement of our holiness and obedience, though he hath promised to reward every good man, far beyond the proportion of any good he hath or can do; yet he hath declared, that these rewards shall be proportionably greater or less, according to the degree of every man's piety and virtue. So our Saviour tells us, that *they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, great shall be their reward in heaven*, Matth. 5. 12. That there will be a difference between the reward of *a righteous man*, and *a prophet*; that is, *of one who is more publickly and eminently useful for the salvation of others*. And among those who are teachers of others, they that are most industrious, and consequently more likely to be successful in this work, shall have a more glorious reward; as we are told by the Angel, *Dan. 12. 3. And they that are wise, (or as it is in the margin rendered, they that be teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever*. So likewise we find in the parable of the talents, that he that improved his talent to ten, was made ruler over ten cities. And St. Paul, 2 Cor. 9. 6. speaking of the degrees of men's charity and liberality towards the poor, says expressly, *he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*; which by proportion of reason may be extended to the exercise of all other graces and virtues, 1 Cor. 15. 41, 42. The Apostle there represents the different degrees of glory, which good men shall be invested with at the resurrection, by the different glory and splendor of the heavenly luminaries. *There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star dif-*

SERM. *fereth from another star in glory: So also is the resur-*  
 XXV. *rection of the dead.* So that the more any man suffers  
 for God, and the more patiently he suffers, the more  
 holily and virtuously, the more charitably and use-  
 fully he lives in *this* world; the more good works  
 will accompany him into the *next*, and the greater  
 and more glorious reward he may hope to receive  
 there; which as the Apostle reasons (in the conclu-  
 sion of that chapter concerning the doctrine of the  
 resurrection) ought to be a mighty encouragement to  
 every one of us, not only to be *stedfast and unmove-*  
*able* (that is, fixed and resolute in the profession and  
 practice of our religion) but *abounding likewise in the*  
*work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know, that our*  
*labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Every degree of diligence and industry, in the  
 work and service of God, will most certainly one  
 day turn to a happy account. *Having therefore such*  
*promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all*  
*filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the*  
*fear of God.* The more perfectly holy we are here on  
 earth, the more perfectly happy we shall be in heaven,  
 and continue so to all eternity.

I have now done with the *two* reasons, which are  
 here given in the *text*, of the happiness that good  
 men, such as *die in the Lord*, shall be made partakers  
 of in another life; because *they rest from their labours,*  
*and their works accompany them*; they are freed from  
 all the evils which they suffered, and shall receive the  
 reward of all the good they have done in this life.

I should now have proceeded to make some infe-  
 rences from this discourse; but those I will reserve  
 for another discourse on this subject.

All that I shall add at present, as the *application* of  
 what I have already said, is, that this should stir us  
 to a careful and zealous imitation of those *blessed* per-  
 sons described in the *text*, who are *dead in the Lord,*  
*and are at rest from their labours, and whose works do*  
*accompany them.* Let us imitate them, in their faith  
 and



and patience, in their piety and good works, and in SERM.  
their constancy to God and his truth, which was XXV.  
dearer to them than their lives. ~

Thus their virtues and sufferings are described in the  
*visions* of this book, chap. 13. 10. *Here is the pati-*  
*ence and the faith of the saints;* and chap. 14. 12.  
*Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that*  
*keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus;*  
and chap. 12. 11. *And they overcame by the blood of*  
*the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they*  
*loved not their lives unto the death.*

In this way, and by these steps, all the *saints* and  
*martyrs* of all ages have ascended up to heaven, and  
attained to that blessed state, which they are now  
possessed of, after all the evils which they suffered in  
this world. *They are now at rest from their labours,*  
and all the good works which they have done *are gone*  
*along with them,* and they are now, and shall for e-  
ver be, receiving the comfort and reward of them.  
And if we tread in their steps, by a zealous imita-  
tion of the piety and holiness of their lives, and of  
the constancy and patience of their sufferings; we  
shall one day be translated into their blessed society,  
and made partakers with them of the same glorious  
reward. If we *have our fruit unto holiness,* our end  
shall be *everlasting life.* If we be *faithful unto death,*  
we shall receive a crown of life.

Let us then, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* exhorts,  
chap. 6. 11, 12. *Every one of us shew the same dili-*  
*gence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end; and*  
*let us not be slothful; but followers of them, who through*  
*faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the  
dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the  
sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,  
make you perfect in every good word and work, working  
in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.

Second Ser-  
mon on this  
text.

# SERMON XXVI.

The Blessedness of Good Men, after  
Death.

REV. xiv. 13.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

SERM.  
XXVI.  
~

**I**N my explication of these words I told you, that they are, in the general sense and meaning of them, *a solemn declaration of the blessed estate of good men after this life*; but delivered upon a special occasion, as is signified by that expression, *from henceforth*; that is, *from the time of that vision*, in which was represented to St. *John*, the last and extremest persecution of the faithful servants of Christ, and which would precede the fatal downfall of *Babylon*; *from that time, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*; that is, considering the extremity, and the cruel circumstances of this last and severest persecution, we may, *from that time forward*, reckon those who are already dead (supposing that *they died in the Lord*) to be very happy; in that they do not live to see and suffer those grievous things, which then will befall the faithful servants of God.

In my former discourse, I considered the words according to the general intention of them, abstracting from the particular occasion upon which they were spoken,

spoken, endeavouring to set forth *the happy estate of* S E R M. *good men after this life*, from the two reasons and XXVI. grounds mentioned in the *text*, namely, because *they rest from their labours*, and because *their works do follow, or accompany and go along with them*; which two particulars constitute the happiness of the future state.

That which farther remains, and to which I now proceed, is to make some *inferences* from what I have said upon this subject. And in doing this, I shall have an eye on the *special occasion* of the words, as well as on their *general intention*. And the *inferences* shall be these following:

*First*, If those that *die in the Lord* are *at rest from their labours* and pains; then the *text* concludes directly against the feigned *purgatory* of the church of Rome, which supposeth a great number of those that *die in the Lord*, and have obtained *eternal redemption* by him from hell, not to pass immediately into happiness; but to be detained in the suburbs of hell, in great pain and torment, till their souls be purged, and the debt of temporary punishment, to which they are liable, be some way or other paid off and discharged.

*Secondly*, Here is a mighty encouragement to piety and virtue, to consider, that all the good we do in this world will *accompany* us into the other.

*Thirdly*, It is a great encouragement to patience under the sufferings and persecutions which attend good men in this world; that how heavy and grievous soever they are at present, they will end with this life, and we shall then *rest from all our labours*.

*Fourthly*, The consideration of *the extreme sufferings* of Christians in *the last times*, and which perhaps are not far from us, should render us very indifferent to life, and all the enjoyments of it, so as even to esteem it a particular grace and favour of God, to be *taken away from the evil to come*, and by death to prevent (if he sees it good) *those extremities* of sufferings, which seem to be hastening upon the world.

I. If

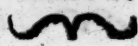


SERM. I. If those *that die in the Lord are at rest from all*  
 XXVI. *their labours and pains*; then this text concludes directly  
 against the feigned *purgatory* of the church of *Rome*, which supposeth a great number, yea, the far greatest part of those *that die in the Lord*, and have obtained *eternal redemption* by him from hell, not to pass immediately into happiness, but to be detained somewhere (they are not certain where, but most probably in the suburbs of hell) in great pain and torment, equal in degree to that of hell, and differing only in duration; I say, to be detained there, till their souls be purged from the defilements they have contracted in this world, and the debt of temporary punishments, to which they are liable, be some way or other paid off and discharged.

They suppose indeed some very few holy men to be so perfect at their departure out of this life; that they do immediately, and without any stop, pass into heaven because they need no purgation; and those likewise who suffer martyrdom, because they discharge their debt of temporary punishments here: But the generality of Christians *who die in the Lord*, they suppose so imperfect, as to stand in need of being *purged by fire*, and accordingly that they are detained a longer or shorter time, as their debt of temporary punishments is greater or less.

And indeed they have a very considerable and substantial reason, to exempt as few as possibly they can from going to *purgatory*; because the more they put in fear of going thither, the market of *indulgences* riseth the higher, and the profit thence accruing to the pope's coffers; and the more and greater legacies will be left to the priests, to hire their saying of *masses*, for the delivery of souls out of the place of torments: For though the prayers of *friends and relations* will contribute some to this; yet nothing does the business so effectually, as the *masses* and prayers of *priests* to that end.

But

But how is it then that St. *John* says, that those S E R M.  
*that die in the Lord are happy, because they rest from* XXVI.  
*their labours*; if so be the far greatest part of those   
*who die in the Lord are so far from resting from their*  
*labours, that they enter into far greater pains and tor-*  
*ments, than ever they endured in this world?* And  
therefore *Bellarmino*, that their doctrine of *purgatory*  
may receive no prejudice from this *text*, would have  
*from henceforth*, in the *text*, to be dated from the *day*  
*of judgment*; when he supposeth the pains of *purga-*  
*tory* will be at end. But why *from henceforth* should  
take date from the *day of judgment*, he can give no  
reason, but only to save *purgatory* from being con-  
demned by this *text*. For St. *John* plainly speaks of  
the happiness of those that should die *after that time*  
(whatever it be) which he there describes; but *that*  
*time* cannot be the *day of judgment*, because none shall  
die *after that time*. Just thus *Estius* (one of their  
most learned commentators) deals with another *text*,  
which by the generality of their writers is urged as  
a plain proof of *purgatory*; *he shall be saved; yet so*  
*as by fire*: Upon which he says, *It is sufficient that*  
*there is nothing in this text against purgatory.* Suffici-  
ent, for what? Not to prove *purgatory*, as they ge-  
nerally pretend from this *text*, but to save it harm-  
less from it; as if we had pretended that this *text*  
makes against it.

But there are others that make against it with a  
witness. Not only the perpetual silence of scripture  
about it, when there are so many fair occasions of  
speaking of it; as in the *parable* of the *rich man* and  
*Lazarus*, where the future state is so particularly de-  
scribed, and yet no mention made, nor the least inti-  
mation given of this *third* state: But besides the  
silence of scripture about it, there are several passages  
utterly inconsistent with it; as namely, St. *Paul's*  
discourse in the beginning of the *fifth* chapter of the  
*second* epistle to the *Corinthians*, where he plainly de-  
clares the assurance he had, that all sincere christians,  
so

SERM. so soon as they quit the body, do pass into happiness:  
 XXVI. *For we know (says he) that if our earthly house of this  
 ~~~~~ tabernacle were dissolved; we have a building of God,  
 a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
 The plain meaning of which is, that so soon as we
 quit the one, we shall pass into the other. And this
 consideration, he tells us, made Christians weary of
 this world, and willing to die; ver. 2. *For in this we
 groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house,
 which is from heaven;* and ver. 4. *For we that are
 in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.* But had
 Christians believed, that the greatest part of them,
 when they left the body, were to go into purgatory,
 to be terribly tormented there; they would not have
 been in such haste to die; but would have protracted
 the time as long as they could, and have contentedly
 born the burden of this earthly tabernacle, rather than
 to quit it, for a condition a thousand times more in-
 tolerable. But St. Paul expressly says, that Christians
 knew the contrary; and that as soon as ever they
 went out of the body they should be happy, and with
 the Lord; and that this gave them courage against
 the fears of death; ver. 6. *Therefore we are always
 confident, ~~etiam in hac vita~~ bono igitur animo sumus;*
*Therefore we are always of good courage, knowing that
 whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from
 the Lord;* and ver. 8. *We are of good courage, I say,
 and willing rather to be absent from the body, and pre-
 sent with the Lord.* The plain sense of which is, that
 Christians were willing rather to die than to live;
 because they knew, that so soon as they left the body
 and departed this life, they should be present with the
 Lord. But now if the doctrine of purgatory be true,
 this whole reasoning of St. Paul proceeds upon a gross
 mistake; and therefore I am certain it is not true:
 And so does the voice from heaven here in the text;
*blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they
 may rest from their labours:* For there is no reason to
 restrain the general expression, *that die in the Lord,*
 only

only to the martyrs; for though they are certainly included, and perhaps primarily intended in it; yet this phrase comprehends all those *who die in the faith of Christ*, and is most frequently so used in the New Testament. S E R M. XXVI.

But let this suffice to have been spoken of this matter; especially since bishop *Fisher* and several of their own learned writers, do so frankly acknowledge, that their doctrine of *purgatory* hath no sufficient ground in scripture. Other reasons I grant they have for it, which make them very loth to quit it; it is a very profitable doctrine, and therefore they have taken care to have it more abundantly confirmed, by apparitions of souls from the dead, than any other doctrine whatsoever. In short, how little soever they can say for it, it is in vain to go about to persuade them to part with it. *Demetrius the silversmith* argued as well as he could for his goddess *Diana*, from the universal consent of the world in the worship of her; the great goddess *Diana*, whom all *Asia*, and the world worshippeth. But his trusty argument to his workmen was, *Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth, and this our craft is in danger to be set at nought.*

II. Here is a mighty encouragment to piety and virtue, to consider that all the good we do in this world will accompany us into the other. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for their works accompany them.*

When we come to die, we can call nothing our own but the good works which by the grace of God we have been enabled to do in this life. These will stick by us, and bear us company into the other world, when we shall be stript of all other things, and forced to part from them, whether we will or no. Our riches and our honours, our sensual pleasures and delights will all take their leave of us, when we leave this world; nay, many times they do not accompany us so far as the grave, but leave us

SERM. us very unkindly and unseasonably, when we have
XXVI. the greatest need and use of them.

There is one way indeed, whereby we may secure our riches, and make sure friends to our selves of them, by laying them out in charity. By this means we may send them before us, and consign them over to another world, to make way for our reception there. So our Lord assures us, *Luke 12. 33. that by giving alms we provide ourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not*; and, *Luke 16. 9. that by this way we may make to our selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. The mammon of unrighteousness*, What is that? It is what the scripture elsewhere calls *deceitful riches*, because in other ways, in which men commonly lay them out, they turn to no certain account, but one way or other do deceive and frustrate our expectation: by disposing of them in charity, to the relief of the poor and persecuted, we *make sure friends* of them, and consign the effects of them to our certain benefit and advantage in another world.

And as charity, so likewise all other graces and virtues are *that good part that cannot be taken away from us*. All the good actions that we do in this life, will go with us to the grave, and bear us company into the other world, and will stand by us, when we come to appear before our Judge, and thro' the merits of our blessed Saviour will procure for us, at the hands of a gracious and merciful God, a most ample and eternal reward.

And what an encouragement is this to holiness and virtue, to consider that it will be all our own another day, and turn to our unspeakable advantage at our great account! To be assured, that whoever serves God faithfully, lays up so much treasure for himself, which he may take along with him into the other world; and does provide for himself lasting comforts and faithful companions, which will never leave him

nor forsake him; a happiness large as his desires, and durable and immortal as his soul!

S E R M.

XXVI.

Let us then do all the good that possibly we can, whilst we have opportunity: Let us serve God industriously, and with all our might, knowing that no good action that we do shall be lost and fall to the ground, that no grace and virtue that we practice in this life, nor any degree of them, shall lose their reward. If we faithfully improve the talents which are committed to us, to our master's advantage; when he comes to call us to an account, and finds that we have done so, we shall not fail to receive both his approbation and reward. And what a comfort will it be to any one of us, to hear those blessed words from the mouth of our Lord; well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a little, I will make thee ruler over much; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! We shall not need to plead our services to him, and put him in mind of them: Our Judge himself will celebrate our good deeds upon the theatre of the world, and commemorate them to our advantage; and interpret every good office we have done, to any of his poor and afflicted members, as if it had been a kindness immediately done to himself. So our Lord represents the proceedings of the great Judge and King of the world, in the great day of recompence, Matth. 25. 34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord when saw we thee in any of these circumstances; hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and ministered unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,

SERM. *brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Who would not
 XXVI. be ambitious and glad to serve such a prince, who
 will so benignly interpret, and so bountifully reward
 the least service we do to him!

III. The consideration of this should likewise be a great argument and support to our patience, under all those evils, and sufferings, and persecutions, which many times attend good men in this world. They are for the present perhaps very heavy and grievous; but there is a time shortly coming, when we shall be at ease, and perfectly freed from them; when we shall find *rest from our labours* and sufferings; when we shall enter into peace, and rest in our beds, every one walking in his uprightness; that is, reaping the comfort and enjoying the reward of his sincerity towards God, and constant suffering for his cause and truth. And therefore it is well said of a good man, *blessed be God that we are to die*; because to good men, that is a certain remedy of all the evils of this life, and will unquestionably put an end to them. The grave is a place of rest, and discharge from all trouble, as *Job* elegantly describes it, chap. 3. 17, 18, 19. *There the wicked cease from troubling: there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master.*

So soon as we enter into the other world, we are secure against the pursuit and danger of all those evils which afflicted us in this world; and nothing will remain but the joyful remembrance of our sufferings, and the plentiful reward of our constancy and patience under them. And the more our tribulations and persecutions have abounded, the greater will our comfort and happiness then be, *which* (saith St. Paul) *is a manifest token, a clear demonstration, of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompence to you*
 who

who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels, 2 Thes. 1. 5, 6, 7. SERM. XXVI.

IV. The consideration of the extreme sufferings, which are to fall upon the faithful servants of Christ in the last times, and which seem now to be begun in the world, should make us very contented to leave this world, and glad of any fair opportunity and excuse, to take our leave of it, and to be out of the reach and danger of those violent and more than human temptations, with which our faith and conscience may be assailed; nay, to esteem it a particular grace and favour of God to us, to be taken away from the evil to come, and to prevent (if God sees it good) those extremities of suffering which are coming upon the world.

These seem now to be begun in some part of it: They in our neighbour nation have a bitter cup put into their hands; a cup of astonishment to all those that hear of it. Whether this be that last and extreme persecution spoken of here by St. John, I shall not pretend positively to determine. It is plainly distinguished in the visions, from that under the first beast, described Rev. 13. from verse the first to ver. 11. and chap. 17. there is a description of the beast upon which the woman sitteth, on whose forehead is a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON the GREAT: And this beast is there said to have seven heads and ten horns, which are thus explained by St. John, chap. 17. 9, 10. And here is the mind which hath wisdom; the seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth; and there are seven kings, that is (as is generally agreed by interpreters) a succession of seven governments: And ver. 12, 13, 14. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdoms as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast; and shall make war with the lamb. And ver. 18. And the woman which thou sawest, is

SERM. *that great city which reigneth over the kings of the*
XXVI. *earth.*

So that *this beast* is plainly *the Roman empire*; and *the woman that sitteth upon her*, is *the great city* standing upon *seven mountains*, which reigneth over the kings of *the earth*; which can be no other than *Rome*, as is agreed by interpreters on all sides. *Bellarmino* (l. 2. c. 2. de *Rom. Pontif.*) confesseth that *St. John* in the *Revelations* every where calleth *Rome, Babylon*, as *Tertullian* (saith he) hath noted, and as is plain from chap. 17. where *Babylon* is said to be seated on *seven mountains*, and to have dominion over the kings of the *earth*: There being no other city than *Rome*, which in the time of *St. John* had dominion over the kings of the *earth*; and that *Rome* was built upon *seven hills* is famous. Thus much *Bellarmino* acknowledgeth, constrained by the force of truth; and for another small reason; namely, because *St. Peter* writes his first epistle from *Babylon*, by which if *Rome* be not meant, they have no proof from scripture, that *St. Peter* was ever there.

Indeed they of the church of *Rome* would have it to be only *Rome Pagan*. But that cannot be; because *this beast*, after his last head was wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and power given him to continue two and forty months, or (as it is elsewhere expressed) twelve hundred sixty days; that is, in the prophetick style, so many years; and likewise because it was not to begin till the ten kingdoms, into which the *Roman empire* upon its dissolution was divided, were set up; which was not till after the *western empire* was overthrown and destroyed by the *Goths* and *Vandals*. And lastly, because this is that *Rome* or *Babylon*, which should finally be destroyed, and cast as a millstone into the bottom of the sea, never to rise again; which is yet to come. And of *this beast* it is said, that he should make war with the saints, and overcome them, chap. 13. ver. 7. that is, that he should raise a long and great persecution against them which should

try

W.B.
that Rome
means
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try their faith and patience; ver. 10. *Here is the* SERM.
patience, and the faith of the saints. The beast then XXVI.
with ten horns must be Rome, governing the ten king-
doms, into which the Roman empire was broken; and
 this can be nothing else but Rome Papal, to which
 the ten kings are said to give their power, and to which
 they were in a most servile manner subject for several
 ages, as is plain from history.

And to confirm this, it is very observable, that
 the ancient fathers generally agree that *that which hin-*
dered the revealing of the wicked one (spoken of by St.
 Paul. 2 Theff. 2. 7, 8.) was the Roman empire; and
 and that being removed, the man of sin or Antichrist
 was to succeed in its room. I shall produce a few
 testimonies to this purpose, but very remarkable ones.
 Tertullian expounding what St. Paul means by *him*
that withholdeth or letteth, hath these words, *Quis nisi*
Romanus status, &c. Who is that but the Roman state,
 which being broken into ten kings, shall bring on Anti-
 christ? And then the wicked one shall be revealed.
 And in his *Apology* he gives this reason, why the
 Christians should pray for the Roman emperors, and
 the whole state of the empire; because the greatest
 mischief hanging over the world, is hinder'd by the
 continuance of it. St. Chrysostom speaking of *that*
which hinders the revelation of the man of sin; this
 (says he) can be no other than the Roman empire: for
 as long as that stands, he dares not shew himself; but
 upon the vacancy or ceasing of that, he shall assume to
 himself both the power of God and man. St. Austin,
 in his book *de civit. Dei*, no man (says he) doubts,
 but that the successor to the Roman emperor in Rome
 shall be the man of sin; and we know who hath suc-
 ceeded him.

But now after this, another beast is represented
 coming out of the earth; not succeeding in the place
 of the first beast, but appearing during his continu-
 ance, ver. 12. and he hath these remarkable charac-
 ters, by which he may be known.

SERM. XXVI. 1. He is said to have *but two horns*; by which, according to the interpretation of the *ten horns*, signifying *the ten kingdoms*, into which the Roman empire after its dissolution should be divided, we are in all reason to understand *two of these kingdoms* of which *this beast*, whoever he be, shall be possessed.

2. He is said to *be like a Lamb*, but to *speak like a Dragon*; that is, to pretend and make a shew of great lenity and mildness, in his proceedings; but that really he shall be very cruel. It shall be pretended, that he does all without violence, and without arms; but he shall *speak as a Dragon*, that is, in truth shall exercise great force and cruelty; either alluding to the cruelty of *the dragon*, literally so called; or perhaps prophetically pointing at a *particular sort of armed soldiers*, called by that name of *dragons*, or, as we according to the *French Pronunciation* call them, *dragons*.

3. He shall arise during the continuance of *the first beast*, and engage in his cause; but *the first beast* shall only stand by and look on, ver. 12. *and he exerciseth all the power of the first beast, before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein, to worship the beast, whose deadly wound was healed*; plainly declaring, that *this persecution* should not immediately arise from the *first beast*, which is said to come out of *the sea*, which in this prophecy denotes *the state ecclesiastical*; but from *the second beast*, which comes out of *the earth*, and denotes *the temporal power*. But yet, all this ought to be acted in the sight of *the first beast*, and in his behalf to *compel men to worship him*.

4. That he shall be remarkable for causing fire to come down from heaven to earth, in a wonderful manner, to the great terror and amazement of men; ver. 13. *And he doeth great wonders; so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men*.

5. That

5. That he would interdict all those, who would S E R M.
not worship *the beast*, all commerce with human so- XXVI.
ciety, the exercise of civil trades and professions; 
ver. 17. *And he causeth, that no man might buy or
sell, save he that had the mark of the beast.*

6. And lastly, (which seems to be the most pecu-
liar and characteristical note of all the rest) that his
number should be 666, that is, (as most of the an-
cients understand it) that the *numeral letters* of a cer-
tain word or name should, being computed, amount
to that number. And it is expressly said to be the
number of a man. Ver. 18. *Let him that hath under-
standing count the number of the beast; for it is the
number of a man.* And in the verse before, it is said
to be the number of his name.

Now to whom all these characters do agree, and
especially the last, concerning *the number of his name*,
I shall not presume to conjecture; much less positive-
ly to determine, whether he be now in being; be-
cause it is said to require a particular wisdom and un-
derstanding to find it out. *Here is wisdom; let him
that hath understanding count the number of the beast.*
However the event, when the thing is fully accom-
plish'd, will clearly discover it. Thus much is cer-
tain, that *this extreme persecution*, whenever it shall
be, will forerun the final destruction of *Babylon*,
which will not then be far off. And concerning *this*
it is that St. *John* speaks, chap. 14. 12. when he
says, *here is the patience of the saints, here are they
that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of
Jesus.* And then he immediately adds, as it is in the
text, *and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto
me, Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,
from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they
may rest from their labours; and their works do ac-
company them.* Thus much may suffice to have been
spoken on this text.

Preach'd on
All-Saints
day.

S E R M O N XXVII.

The Vanity and Wickedness of Honouring dead Saints, and Persecuting the Living.

★ L U K E XI. 49, 50, 51.

Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and Apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

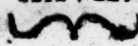
S E R M.
XXVII.

TH E latter part of this chapter is a very sharp, but just *invective*, made by our Saviour against the hypocrisy of the *scribes and pharisees*, of which he gives many instances; and this among the rest for one, that they pretended a great honour and respect for the righteous men, and prophets of former ages, whom their fathers had persecuted and slain; but yet were of the same spirit and temper, and as ready to persecute good men, as their fathers were. They raised indeed stately monuments to the memory of those saints and martyrs, and adorned them with great art and cost, and it is likely made

made a great shew of esteem and veneration for them: but all this while they were of the same disposition with their fathers, and bare the same implacable hatred and malice against the prophets and righteous men who then lived among them, (yea against *that great prophet*, whom God had sent into the world, *Jesus the Son of God*) which their fathers did against the good men of *their* times. And tho' they disclaimed the wickedness and cruelty of their fathers, with never so much zeal and vehemency; yet for all that, they were ready to do the same things. Now this was so gross and odious a piece of hypocrisy in them, that our Saviour doth with great reason denounce so severe a *wo* against them: *wo unto you; for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.* And then it follows; *therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and Apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple.*

There are considerable difficulties in both these passages. As to the former, *wo unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.* The force of this reasoning, is at first sight not easy to be discerned; and therefore expositors have gone several ways to explain it.

Some comparing this with the parallel places in St. Matthew's Gospel (chap. 23. 29.) will not have our Saviour to mean, that by *building the sepulchres of the prophets* they express'd *their approbation of their fathers killing them.* They did indeed testify by

SERM. XXVII.  their usage of *the righteous men* that liv'd amongst themselves, that they were of the very same temper and spirit, which their fathers had been of; and that they would have done just as their fathers did, if they had been in the same circumstances with their fathers; so that *they were witnesses to themselves* (as it is in St. Matthew) *that they were children of them which killed the prophets*; they owned themselves *their children by descent*, and their actions *witnessed* that they were *their children* also in *resemblance*; nay, (as it is there farther intimated) they seem'd resolv'd to *fill up the measure of their fathers*: tho' all this while they pretended not to approve their fathers behaviour; and therefore whilst they were *building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, they said, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*. And the interpreters that go this way do accordingly render these words of St. Luke; not as they are in our translation, *ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers*; but, *ye bear witness, and ye allow (or, are well pleased with) the deeds of your fathers*; that is, ye own that they were your fathers, who did these things; and tho' you do not *in words allow* what they did, yet your *inward tempers and dispositions* (whether you know it or no) are the very same with theirs, which you too plainly *testify* by your *actions*; so that when you *build the sepulchres of the prophets*, you only expose the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of your hearts, your *pretenses* and your *actions* directly contradicting each other. Thus some expositors give the sense of this passage.

But others think, that our Saviour intended somewhat more, in St. Luke, namely to retort upon them the honour which they seemed to do to the prophets, *in building their sepulchres as an argument that they rejoiced in their death*; seeing they were so well content to be at the charge of a monument for them;
like

like *Herod* who when he had murdered *Aristobulus*, S E R M. XXVII.
made a magnificent funeral for him; or as the *Roman* historians say of *Caracalla*, tho' he hated all
good Men, whilst they were alive, yet he would pretend to honour them, when they were dead. This
some think our Saviour intended in these words, *truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres*; as if he had said, hereby ye testify, that ye allow and like very well what your fathers did to the Prophets. According to which latter exposition, there seems to be more force and greater sharpness in our Saviour's reproof; as not only charging them with the ill usage of the righteous men of their own times; but moreover making them, by *their building the tombs, and garnishing the sepulchres*, of the ancient prophets, to become as it were accessaries to the murder of them.

But leaving this digression, I now proceed to that which I primarily intended; namely, *First*, to explain the following words, which I have chosen as my present subject, and *then* to make some observations upon them.

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and Apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute; that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

There are three considerable difficulties in the words, which I shall endeavour to explain to you.

I. What is here meant by the *wisdom of God*.

II. Who this *Zacharias* was here mentioned by our Saviour; *from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple.*

III. In what sense, and with what reason and justice it is here threaten'd, *that the blood of all the prophets*

SER M. prophets and righteous men, shed from the foundation
XXVII. of the world, should be required of that generation.

I. What is here meant by *the wisdom of God*, Therefore also said *the wisdom of God*, I will send them prophets and Apostles, &c. In St. Matthew our Saviour speaks this in his own name, wherefore behold I send unto you prophets: For which reason some think, that by *the wisdom of God*, our Saviour here design'd himself; as if he had said, therefore I, who am *the wisdom of God*, declare unto you. But this is not very probable, our Saviour no where else in the Gospel speaking of himself, in any such style; tho' St. Paul calls him *the power of God*, and *the wisdom of God*. Others think that our Saviour here refers to some prophecy of the Old Testament, to this purpose; therefore *the wisdom of God* hath said, that is, *the holy spirit of Wisdom*, which inspired the prophets in the Old Testament. But this conceit is utterly without ground; for we find no such passage, nor any thing to that Sense, in any of the prophets of the Old Testament.

But the most plain and simple interpretation is this, therefore hath *the wisdom of God* said, that is, *the most wise God* hath determined to send among you such messengers and holy men, and I foresee that ye will thus abuse them, and thereby bring wrath and destruction upon yourselves. And whereas our Saviour says in St. Matthew, behold I send unto you prophets; it is very probable, he speaks in God's name, and that it is to be understood, behold, says God, I send unto you. And this phrase of *the wisdom of God*, for *the most wise God*, is very agreeable to other forms of speech, which we meet with in the Jewish writers; as, *dicat norma judicii*, the rule of judgment says, that is, *the most just and righteous God*; which serves very well to explain the phrase in the text, therefore saith *the wisdom of God*, I will send them prophets and Apostles.

By

By *Apostles* is here meant, all sorts of *divine messengers*: For so *St. Matthew* expresseth it, *I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes*; that is, several holy and excellent men, endowed with all sorts of divine gifts; *prophets, and wise men, and scribes*, which were the most glorious and admired titles among the *Jews*.

And some of them they shall slay and persecute. *St. Matthew* expresseth it more particularly, *some of them ye shall kill and crucify*; as it was afterwards fulfilled in the two *James's*, and *Stephen*, who were slain by them, and in *Simon the son of Cleophas*, and before him in *Jesus the Son of God*, who were crucified; and *some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues*, as we read they did to *Peter* and *John*; and *persecute them from city to city*, as they did *Paul* and *Barnabas*. The sending of these messengers of God among the *Jews*, and this ill usage of them, the all-wise and all-knowing God had determined and foreseen.

II. Who this *Zacharias* was, here mentioned by our Saviour. And there are so many of them (no less than *four* of this name) to whom it may with some probability be applied, but especially to *two* of them, that it is very hard to determine which of them our Saviour means. Three *Zacharias's* are mentioned in scripture, and one more in the history of *Josephus*.

There was *Zacharias* the father of *John the Baptist*; but whose son he was we do not read; and though of his death the scripture is silent, yet there are two traditions about it; one that he was slain by *Herod's* officers, because he would not tell where his son, *John the Baptist* was, when *Herod* sent for him. But the credit of this relies upon very doubtful authors. The other is mentioned by several of the fathers, and the substance of it is briefly this; that there being a place in the temple, where the virgins by themselves used to pray, the virgin *Mary* coming to that place to pray among the virgins, was forbidden,

S E R M. den, because she had had a child ; and that *Zacharias* for maintaining her virginity, was set upon and
 XXVII. *killed between the temple and the altar.* But this tradition is rejected by *St. Jerome* ; and I doubt there is little ground for it.

Zacharias, one of the lesser prophets, was the son of *Barachias*, which agrees so far with *St. Matthew's* description of him : But there is no mention in scripture that he was slain ; nor could he well be in the temple, which was but building in his time ; though the author of the *Targum* says, that *Zacharias* the son of *Ido*, was slain by the Jews in the house of the Lord's sanctuary, on the day of the propitiation ; because he admonished them not to do evil before the Lord. Now *Zacharias* the son of *Barachias*, was the grandson of *Ido* ; but yet, I think this was only lapse of memory, and that he means *Zachary* in the *Chronicles*, who was slain by *Joash*.

And he is the third *Zacharias* I mentioned, & *Chron. 24. 21.* who as he was reproofing the people for transgressing the commandment of the Lord, was stoned with stones at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the Lord. And this our Saviour seems more particularly to reflect upon, immediately after the text ; *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets, &c.* Now this one would think was certainly the person intended by our Saviour, and fit to be mentioned with *Abel*, whose blood is said to have cried to the Lord. For of *Zacharias* it is likewise said, that when he died, he said, the Lord look upon it and require it. And *Drusius* cites a Jewish writer, speaking thus by way of complaint against the Jewish nation ; because in the midst of thee fell the priests of the Lord, and his prophets, and because before the holy temple in the midst of thee was slain the godly and righteous prophet *Zacharias*, who lay unburied, nor did the earth cover his blood, but to this day it goes up and speaks in the midst of thee. So that none could have
 been

been more fit to have been joined with *Abel* in this S E R M.
XXVII.
respect.

But as probable as this looks, there are two very great objections against it. One is, that *St. Matthew* calls the *Zacharias* spoken of by our Saviour, the son of *Barachias*; whereas this *Zacharias* slain by *Joash*, was the son of *Jehoida*; And tho' it be very considerable, which *St. Jerome* observes, that in the *Hebrew* or *Nazarene* gospel, it is *Zacharias* the son of *Jehoiada*; yet it is hard to rely upon that, against all the *Greek* copies. But a more difficult objection, in my opinion, is that our Saviour seems to design to mention the two extreams, the first and last righteous man that was slain, and between them two comprehended the good men of all ages, that were persecuted and slain; and if so, then that *Zacharias* in the *Chronicles*, who was slain so long before, can by no means be the person.

There is yet a fourth *Zacharias*, mentioned by *Josephus*, lib. 4. the son of *Baruch* (which is probably enough the same name with *Barachias*) who was the last remarkable good man that was slain, immediately before the siege of *Jerusalem*; and that as *Josephus* tells us, in the midst of the temple; which agrees with our Saviour's description of it, *between the altar and the temple*; not the altar of incense, but of burnt-offerings which was in the outward court, before the ascent to the temple. So that *Grotius* thinks *this* was the man intended by our Saviour, yet so that he does both allude to the history of the former *Zacharias*, and foretel the death of this. And there is but one objection against this; that our Saviour speaks of this as already past; *whom you have slain*; whereas this *Zacharias* was not slain till after our Saviour's death. But I think that a satisfactory answer may be given to this (*viz.*) that our Saviour foretelling those future persecutions, which should fill up the measure of their sins, and bring final destruction upon them, he speaks of this as already past, be-
cause

S E R M. cause before that destruction should come upon them,
 XXVII. it would be true, *they had slain him*: So that speaking of the vengeance coming upon them, well might he say, *that upon them should come the blood of all the righteous men, from Abel to Zacharias, whom they had slain, &c.*

III. The *third* difficulty remains, and that is, in what sense, and with what reason and justice it is here threatned, *that the blood of all the prophets and righteous men, shed from the foundation of the world, should be required of that generation.* Some understand this more strictly; they should be charged with it, and formally punished for it, because in imitating their cruel predecessors, they should be guilty of all their cruelty. But there is no necessity of this. All that our Saviour seems to intend, is this, that their punishment in the destruction of *Jerusalem*, should be so horrible, as if God had *once for all* arraigned them of all the righteous blood that ever had been shed in the world, and brought the punishment of it upon them; though in truth the punishment did not exceed the desert of *their own* sins. And if this be the meaning of it, there is nothing harsh and unreasonable in it. And thus I have explained, as well as I can, the several difficulties in the *text*. I shall make two or three observations from the main scope and design of it and so conclude.

I. That it hath been the lot of holy and righteous men, in most ages of the world, to meet with very bad usage, to be *persecuted and slain*. The devil began this work early. When there were but three men in all the world, and two of them brethren; the one *slaw* the other, *because he was more righteous*, and served God better than he did. And this trade hath continued, and been practised more or less, in most ages and generations of the world, as might be deduced through the history of the Old and New Testament, and of most ages since, *though the rod of the wicked hath not always abode upon the back of the righteous,*

righteous, lest at last piety should be quite discourag- S E R M.
ed, and the faithful fail from among the children of men. XXVII.

The people and the church of God have had many intervals of peace and prosperity; and sometimes for a long continuance, the favour and countenance of authority, and the powers of the world, and the laws of nations on their side.

But yet there is a continual *enmity between the seed of the woman, and the serpent, between the righteous and the wicked, between those that serve God, and those that serve him not*; because their ways are contrary one to another, and quite of another fashion, their principles and practices do contradict and clash with one another; the virtues of good men are continually upbraiding of the bad, a living reproof and reproach to them; so that it is no wonder, that evil men do so violently hate and persecute the good, and do by all means endeavour to remove out of the way those who are so opposite and offensive to them.

II. We may observe likewise hence, how great a sin they are guilty of, who persecute the righteous, and how terrible a vengeance from God waits on them. Particular examples of this have been in all ages: But as the guilt of this sin never went higher, than at this time foretold by our Saviour, when God sent to the Jews such *prophets, and wise men, and scribes*, and such a number of them as never upon any occasion were sent into the world, and they used them in that bloody and barbarous manner; no wonder, if the vengeance that came upon them was such as never had been before; and if, after they had *filled up the measure* of their sins, by *crucifying the Lord Jesus*, and *persecuting his apostles*, and *stoning and killing all the prophets* that were sent unto them, *the wrath of God came upon them to the utmost*, and such a terrible destruction from the Lord, as never befel any people; insomuch that our Saviour, upon the foresight and mention of it, forty years before it happened, could not but *weep over them*, and express himself

S E R M. himself in those compassionate words, O *Jerusalem*,
 XXVII. *Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them*
 which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; but ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate.

III. From this whole passage of our Saviour, which I have been explaining to you, we may learn how vain it is for men to pretend to honour *the dead saints*, when they persecute *the living*. This was the great hypocrisy of *the Scribes and Pharisees* among the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; and is at this day of the rulers and governors of the *Roman church* among us *Christians*; nay, they exceed *the Scribes and Pharisees* not only in their veneration of *the ancient saints and righteous men*, but also, if it be possible, in their malice and cruelty towards the living. For they not only build costly monuments to their memory, which was the utmost *the Scribes and Pharisees* did, but they honour them with shrines and rich offerings, with prayers and vows to them, more frequent than to Almighty God himself, and our blessed Saviour; but then they hate and persecute *the living*, with as great violence and cruelty, as ever was used by any part of mankind towards one another. 'Tis true they do it under the notion of *heresy*; and so did *the Scribes and Pharisees* too, as St. Paul witnesseth, *After the way which ye call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and in the prophets*. So they call us *hereticks*; though we receive and believe all that is written in the holy scriptures, only rejecting their additions, whereby they would make the commandment of God of none effect. And as Rome is parallel with *Jerusalem* in many other respects; so especially in the bloody persecution of righteous men: And as *Jerusalem* is charged by our Saviour with *the blood of all the prophets and righteous men of all ages*; so St. John in the Revelation says of Rome, that in
 her

her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, chap. 18. 24. SERM. XXVII.
Which is no less true of *Rome Christian*, than of *Rome Pagan*. In all the churches and religions in the world, and perhaps in *Rome Pagan* herself, hath not so much innocent blood been shed, as in *Rome Christian* and *Catholick*, and that under a pretence of religion: And no doubt there is a day coming, when she shall be called to a heavy account for these things, when the heavens shall rejoice over her, and the holy Angels and prophets, because God hath avenged them on her.

SERMON XXVIII.

Preach'd

Novem. 5.

1682.

or
Capit. Comp. Ser.

The Danger of Zeal, without Knowledge.

ROM. x. 2.

I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God; but not according to knowledge.

THERE is nothing more commonly cried up, than *zeal in religion*; and yet there is nothing in which men do more frequently and fatally mistake and miscarry, and in the expressions and effects whereof men ought to govern themselves with more care and caution. To speak the truth, *zeal* is as all other passions are, in its own nature indifferent, and of itself neither good nor bad; but according to the object and degree of it: For *zeal* is nothing else, but an earnest concernment for, or against, something, and a violent pursuit and prosecution.

SERM.

XXVIII.

SERM. on of it. For if it be applied to a right object, so
 XXVIII. as we be earnestly concerned for things that are un-
 ~~~~~ questionably good; and against things that are un-  
 questionably evil; and in a due degree; that is, if  
 the expression of it be proportionable to the less or  
 greater good or evil of things; then it is a commend-  
 able quality or virtue: But if it be wrong placed,  
 and we be earnestly concerned for that which is evil,  
 and against that which is good, or about things  
 which are of an indifferent or doubtful nature, as to  
 the good and evil of them; or if we notoriously ex-  
 ceed in the degree of it, being more zealously con-  
 cerned about things, than they deserve, and zealously  
 concerned about lesser things, to the prejudice of great-  
 er; in any of these cases, it is so far from being a virtue  
 that it is a vice, of a most pernicious and mischie-  
 vious consequence, and many times hath as bad ef-  
 fects, as can proceed from the worst principle or  
 disposition of mind.

It is sometimes used in a good sense; but it is,  
 when it is applied to the best things, in which the  
 honour of God, and the salvation of men is concern-  
 ed, to the great and unquestionable duties of religion.  
 As zeal for the honour of God, and the place of his  
 publick worship, in opposition to prophaneness, *John*  
*2. 17. The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up:* For  
 an earnest desire of those gifts, whereby we are to  
 edify the church, *1 Cor. 12. 31. But covet earnestly*  
*the best gifts,* so we render the words; *be zealous of*  
*the best gifts,* so it is in the Greek: for a forwardness  
 and readiness to relieve the necessities of the saints,  
*2 Cor. 9. 2. I know the forwardness of your minds,*  
*and your zeal hath provoked very many.* And to the  
 same purpose is that expression, *Tit. 2. 14. zealous*  
*of good works,* And then for a zeal for the salvation  
 of mens souls, *2 Cor. 11. 2. I am zealous of you*  
*with a godly zeal.*

But the word is much more frequently in scripture  
 used in a bad sense, for a malicious and furious rage,  
 against

against the professors of christianity. *Acts* 5. 17, 18. S E R M.  
*Then the high-priest, and they that were with him, XXVIII.*  
*were filled with indignation (the word is zeal) and*  
*laid their hands on the Apostles, and put them in pri-*  
*son. And, chap. 13. 45. it is said, the Jews were*  
*filled with zeal, and spake against those things which*  
*were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.*  
*And, chap. 17. 5. The Jews which believed not,*  
*moved with zeal, gathered a company, and set all the*  
*city in an uproar.*

'Tis frequently reckoned amongst *the works of the flesh*, and mentioned in the company of the greatest vices and crimes; wrath, contention, division, sedition, murders, tumults, confusions. *Rom.* 13. 13. *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and zeal.* *1 Cor.* 3. 3. *Whereas there is among you zeal, and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal?* *2 Cor.* 12. 20. *Lest there be debates, zeal, wrath, strife.* *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *The works of the flesh are manifest, among which the Apostle reckons, hatred, variance, zeal, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders.* *St. James* calls it a bitter zeal; *James* 3. 14, 15, 16. *But if ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lye not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where zeal and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* By which it appears that zeal most frequently goes under a bad name and character in scripture; zeal, I mean, in matters of religion; for of that most of the texts I have mentioned speak; and this is that which *St. Paul* means here in the text, by a zeal of God, that is, a zeal about religion, and divine things. *I bear them record, they have a zeal of God; but not according to knowledge.*

In which words the Apostle being desirous to say the best he could of his countrymen, the Jews, he commends the good meaning of their zeal, and blames

SERM. the ill conduct of it. *I bear them record, μεμνησθαι αὐτοῖς,*  
 XXVIII. *I give this testimony on their behalf, that they have a*  
 zeal of God, that is, that by all this fierceness against  
 the christian religion, they intend the honour of God, and  
 think they do him service: but yet this zeal is greatly  
 to be condemned; because it is *a mistaken and mis-*  
*guided zeal* not at all directed as it should be; *they*  
*have a zeal of God; but not according to know-*  
*ledge.*

From which words I shall take into consideration  
 these *three* things.

I What are the qualifications and properties of a  
*zeal according to knowledge.*

II. By what marks and characters we may know  
*that zeal*, which here, and elsewhere in scripture, is  
 condemned, as *not being according to knowledge.*

III. How far the doing of any thing, out of a  
*zeal for God*, doth mitigate and extenuate the evil of  
 it. For when the Apostle here testifies concerning  
 the *Jews*, that they had *a zeal for God*; he speaks  
 this in favour of them, and by way of mitigation of  
 their faults. When I have handled these *three* parti-  
 culars, I shall apply my discourse to the present occa-  
 sion of *this day*.

I. What are the qualifications and properties of a  
*zeal according to knowledge.* I shall mention these  
*three.*

1. That our zeal be right, in respect of its ob-  
 ject.

2. That the measure and degree of it be proporti-  
 oned to the good or evil of things, about which it is  
 conversant.

3. That we pursue it by lawful ways and  
 means.

1. That our zeal be right, in respect of its object;  
 I mean, that those things which we are zealous for,  
 be certainly and considerably good; and that those  
 things which we are zealous against, be certainly and  
 considerably evil. A mistake in any of these quite  
 mars



mars our zeal, and spoils the virtue of it: And S E R M.  
 though it be never so much intended for God, it is XXVIII.  
 not at all pleasing and acceptable to him; because it  
 is a blind and ignorant and mistaken zeal: And the  
 hotter, the worse; it is not an heavenly fire, *that*  
*comes down from above*; but it is like the fire of hell,  
 heat without light. If we mistake good and evil,  
 and be zealously concerned, against that which is  
 good, or for that which is evil; the greater our zeal  
 is, the greater is our fault; and instead of doing  
 God and religion service and credit, we do the great-  
 est mischief and dishonour we can to them both: Or  
 if the thing about which our zeal is conversant, be  
 of a doubtful uncertain nature; this is not properly  
 an object of zeal. Men should never be earnest for  
 or against any thing, but upon clear and certain  
 grounds, that what we contend so earnestly for, is  
 undoubtedly good; and that which we are so violent  
 against, is undoubtedly evil: If it be not, we are  
*zealous for we know not what, and that I am sure is*  
*a zeal not according to knowledge.*

And if the thing be *certainly* good or evil, which  
 we are so concerned about; it must also be *consider-*  
*ably* so: Otherwise it will not warrant our being  
 zealous about it. All truth is good, and all error  
 bad; but there are many truths so inconsiderable, and  
 which have so small an influence upon practice, that  
 they do not deserve our zeal and earnest contention  
 about them; and so likewise are there many errors  
 and mistakes, of so slight and inconsiderable a nature,  
 that it were better, men should be let alone in them,  
 than provoked to quarrel and contend about them.

Thus that great heat that was in the christian  
 church, about the time of observing *Easter*, was, in  
 my opinion, *a zeal not according to knowledge.* They  
 were on both sides agreed in the main, which was to  
 celebrate the memory of our Saviour's resurrection:  
 But there were different customs about the time,  
 which was a matter of no such consideration, as to

S E R M. deserve so much heat and zeal about it, especially  
 XXVIII. considering the uncharitable and mischievous consequences of that difference.

2. That our *zeal* may be *according to knowledge*; the measure and degree of it must be proportioned to the good or evil of things, about which it is conversant. That is an *ignorant zeal*, which is conversant about lesser things, and unconcerned for greater. Such was the zeal of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were mightily concerned about external and lesser matters; but took little or no care of inward purity, and real and substantial goodness; they were very careful, *not to eat with unwashed hands, and to make clean the outside of the cup and platter*; but then they *were full of extortion, and all unrighteousness: They payed tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin; but omitted the weightier things, judgment, mercy, and fidelity*; or, as St. Luke expresseth it, *they pass over judgment and the love of God*.

A zealous strictness about external rites and matters of difference, where there is a visible neglect of the substantial duties of religion, and the great virtues of a good life, is either a gross ignorance of the true nature of religion, or a sullen hypocrisy. And so likewise is a loud and zealous outcry against rites and ceremonies, and the imposition of indifferent things in religion, when men can release themselves from the obligation of natural and moral duties, and *pass over mercy and justice and charity*.

3. A zeal that is *according to knowledge*, must be pursued and prosecuted by lawful and warrantable means. No zeal for God and his glory, for his true church and religion, will justify the doing of that which is morally and in it self evil. *Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? We do not know what belongs to the honour of God and religion, if we think to promote his glory, by means so dishonourable and offensive to him*. The apostle pronounceth it *a damnable sin*, for any to charge this doctrine

doctrine upon christianity, *that evil may be done for a* S E R M.  
*good end, and to promote the glory of God, Rom. 3. XXVIII.*  
 8. *As we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm*  
*that we say, let us do evil that good may come; whose*  
*damnation is just.*

And yet nothing is more frequent, than for men, out of a zeal for God and religion, to over-look the evil and unlawfulness of the means they use, for the advancing so good an end. This is that which hath sanctified those refined arts of lying and perjury, by equivocation and mental reservation; those seditious ways of disturbing the peace of kingdoms, by treason and rebellion, by the excommunicating and deposing of princes, upon pretence of *heresy*; of extirpating those, whom they please to call *hereticks*, by inquisitions, and croisado's, and massacres; and this, not only in the opinion of private persons, but in the judgment of *popes*, and of *general councils*. I proceed in the

II. Place to shew by what marks and characters we may know the contrary zeal, that which is *not according to knowledge*, which is condemned here in the *text*, and very frequently in other places of scripture: And though *this* may be sufficiently known by the contrary marks and properties (which I shall but briefly mention) yet to discover it more fully, I shall add *one* or *two* more very gross and sensible signs and instances of it.

I. It is a *zeal without knowledge*, that is mistaken in the proper object of it, that calls *good evil*, and *evil good*; a zeal for gross errors and superstitions, plainly contrary either to the revelation of God's word, or the light of reason, or to common sense; any or all of these cannot be a *zeal according to knowledge*. A zeal for the worship of images, for praying to saints and angels, contrary to the plain law and word of God; a zeal for the sacrilegious depriving of people of half the sacrament, contrary to our Saviour's plain institution, and the acknowledged



SERM. practice of the catholick church, for a thousand  
 XXVIII. years; a zeal for *that most absurd* of all doctrines that  
 ever was taught in any religion, I mean *the doctrine*  
*of transubstantion*, not only without any sufficient au-  
 thority from scripture (as is acknowledged by several  
 of the most learned of the *Roman church*) but con-  
 trary to reason, and in defiance of the sense of all  
 mankind; a zeal for these, and many more like  
 gross errors and practices; cannot possibly be *a zeal*  
*according to knowledge.*

2. That is *a zeal without knowledge*, the degree  
 whereof is manifestly disproportioned to the good or  
 evil of things about which it is conversant; when  
 there is in men a greater and fiercer zeal for the ex-  
 ternals of religion, than for the vital and essential  
 parts of it; *for the traditions of men*, than for *the*  
*commandments of God*; for bodily severities, than for  
 the mortification of our lusts; for the means of reli-  
 gion, than for the end of it: a greater zeal against  
 the omission and neglect of some senseless and super-  
 stitious practices, than against the practice of the  
 grossest immoralities; and against the deniers of the  
 doctrines of transubstantiation, and of the pope's in-  
 fallibility, and equal, if not a greater zeal (I am  
 sure a more severe prosecution) than against those who  
 deny our Saviour to be the true *Messias*, and the son  
 of God: This certainly is not *a zeal according to*  
*knowledge.* Nor,

3. That which is prosecuted by unlawful and un-  
 warrantable means. That cannot be *a zeal of God*  
*according to knowledge*, which warrants *the doing of*  
*evil, that good may come*; the violating of truth and  
 faith, and of the peace of human society, for the  
 cause of the catholick church; and breaking the eter-  
 nal and immutable laws of God, for the advancing  
 of his glory. Nor,

4. An uncharitable zeal, which is an enemy to  
 peace, and order, and thinks itself sufficiently war-  
 ranted to separate from the communion of christians,  
 and

and to break the peace of the church upon every scruple, and upon every fancy and conceit of unlawful impositions, though in the most indifferent things; nay upon this single point, *because a thing which they acknowledge lawful, and indifferent in itself, is in the worship of God enjoined by authority*; the most unreasonable principle that I think ever was avowed among Christians; not to do a thing, which otherwise they might do, only because it is enjoined; and to fancy that an indifferent thing becomes presently unlawful, because it is commanded by lawful authority; and that it is a sin to do any thing, in the worship of God, which is not left to their liberty, whether they will do it or not. This is not only *a zeal without knowledge*, but *contrary to common sense*. Nor,

5. A furious and cruel zeal, which St. James calls *a bitter, or a wrathful zeal*, and which tends to *confusion and every evil work*, which is blind with its own rage, and makes men, as St. Paul says of himself, when he persecuted the Christians, *exceedingly mad* against all that differ from them, and stand in the way of their fierce and outrageous zeal.

6. And lastly, A zeal for ignorance, is most certainly *not a zeal according to knowledge*; and *this is a zeal peculiar to the church of Rome*, by such strict laws to forbid people the use of the holy scriptures in a known tongue; nay not so much as to allow them to understand what they do in the service of God; to require them to be present at their publick prayers, and to join with them in them, without letting them know the meaning of them; to pretend to teach them, by reading lessons to them in an unknown tongue; and all this under pretence of increasing their devotion; as if the less men understand of the service of God, the more they would be affected with it, and edified by it.

And yet there is nothing in which the church of Rome hath been more *zealously* concerned, than to keep the people in ignorance: Nothing they have opposed

SERM.  
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opposed with more obstinacy, against the repeated application of princes and people, at the beginning of the reformation, than to allow the people the use of the scriptures, and in their publick prayers, in a known tongue. And their obstinacy in this point, was not without reason; nothing being more certain, than that if the people were once brought to understand the scriptures, they would soon quit their religion, which in so many things is so directly contrary to the word of God. The

III. And last thing remains to be spoken to, *viz.* How far the doing of things, out of *a zeal for God*, doth mitigate and extenuate the evil of them. For when the Apostle here testifies concerning the *Jews*, that they had *a zeal of God*, he speaks this in favour of them, and by way of mitigation of their fault. *I bear them record*; I who was once acted by this ignorant and furious zeal, which now possesseth them, and persecuted the Christians in the same outrageous manner, as they still continue to do, and all this with a very good conscience, as I thought, and out of *a zeal for God*, and the true religion. So he tells us, *Acts 26. 9. I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.* So that his zeal was sincere, and with a real intention to do service to God and religion; and yet for all that was very faulty and sinful, and, if he had persisted in it, damnable; so that his confidence, that he was in the right, and the sincerity of his zeal in acting according to the persuasion of his conscience, did not alter the nature of the actions he did out of this zeal, and make them less wicked in themselves; tho' it was some mitigation of the fault of the person, and rendered him more capable of the mercy of God by repentance, than if he had done contrary to his conscience, and the clear convictions, of his own mind.

And therefore the best way to understand the great evil and wickedness of this furious and blind zeal,



zeal, will be, to consider the account which St. Paul, S E R M. after his conversion, gives of his own doings, and XXVIII. what load he lays upon himself, notwithstanding the sincerity of his zeal, and that he acted according to his conscience. *Acts viii, and ix.* you have the history at large of his outrageous doings, how he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and hal-  
*ling men and women to prison; how he breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Acts 22. 4. I persecuted, says he, this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. And chap. 26. 10, 11. Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I prosecuted them even to strange cities. Gal. 1. 13, 14. Ye have heard, says he, of my conversation in times past, in the Jews religion; how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 1 Tim. 1. 13. Who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious.* So that he chargeth himself with the guilt of blasphemy and murder, and a most furious and outrageous persecution of good men; for which elsewhere he pronounceth himself *the chief of sinners.* From whence it evidently appears, that men may do the most wicked and damnable sins, out of a zeal for God.

And this was the case of many of the Jews, as our Saviour foretold, that *the time should come, when they should kill them, thinking they did God good service.* But yet for all this, the Apostles of our Lord make no scruple, to charge them with downright murder. *Acts 2. 23. speaking of their putting our Saviour to death, whom ye by wicked hands have crucified and slain. And Acts 7. 52. The just one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.*

Yet

SERM. Yet notwithstanding their sin was of this high nature in it self, it was some mitigation of the fault of the persons, that they did these things out of an ignorant zeal, and rendered them more capable of the mercy of God, upon their repentance. And upon this account our Saviour interceded with God for mercy for them; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* St. Peter also pleads the same in mitigation of their fault, *Acts 3. 17. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.* And St. Paul tells us, that he found mercy, upon his repentance, on this account, *1 Tim. 1. 13. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief.* But still, for all this, wicked things done out of conscience and zeal for God, are damnable, and will prove so, without repentance.

I shall now draw some *inferences* from this discourse, by way of application.

1. If it be so necessary, that our zeal be directed by knowledge; this shews us how dangerous a thing zeal is in the weak and ignorant sort of people. Zeal is an edge-tool, which children in understanding should not meddle withal; and yet it most frequently possesseth the weakest minds; and commonly by how much *the less knowing* people are, by so much *the more zealous* they are: And in the church of Rome, where knowledge is professedly discouraged, and suppressed in the common people, zeal is mightily countenanced and cherished. And they make great use of it; for this blind and furious zeal, is that which inspires them to do such cruel and barbarous things, as were hardly ever acted among the heathen. Zeal is only fit for wise men; but it is chiefly in fashion among fools.

Nay it is dangerous in the hands of wise men, and to be governed and kept in with a strict rein; otherwise it will transport them to the doing of undue and irregular things. *Moses*, one of the wisest and best of men, and most likely to govern and manage his  
zeal



zeal as he ought, and to keep aloof from all excess S E R M.  
 and extravagance, being *the meekest man upon earth*; XXVIII.  
 yet he was so surpris'd, upon a sudden occasion, that  
*in a fit of zeal*, he let fall the two tables of the law,  
 which he had but just received from God, and dash'd  
 them in pieces. A true emblem of *an ungoverned*  
*zeal*, in the transport whereof even good men are apt  
 to forget the laws of God, and let them fall out of  
 their hands, and to break all the obligations of natu-  
 ral and moral duties.

2. From hence we plainly see, that men may do  
 the worst and wickedst things out of *a zeal for God*  
 and religion. Thus it was among the *Jews*, who  
 engross'd salvation to themselves, and deny'd the possi-  
 bility of it to all the world besides; and the church  
 of *Rome* have taken copy by them, as in an arrogant  
 conceit of themselves, so in the blindness, and fury,  
 and uncharitableness of their zeal towards all, who  
 refuse to submit to their authority and directions.

And as the teachers and rulers of the *Jewish* church  
 did of old, so doth the church of *Rome* now; *they*  
*take away the key of knowledge from the people, and will*  
*neither enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor*  
*suffer those that would, to enter in.* They brand for  
*hereticks*, those who make the holy scriptures the rule  
 of their faith and worship; as *St. Paul* tells us the  
*Jews* did in his time. *Acts 24. 14. After the way*  
*which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers,*  
*believing all things which are written in the law, and*  
*the prophets.* They establish the merit of their own  
 righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of  
 God, by the faith of Jesus Christ. So *St. Paul* tells  
 us the *Jews* did, in the verse immediately after the  
 text; *for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and*  
*going about to establish their own righteousness, have not*  
*submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.* And  
 as the *Jews* anathematiz'd and excommunicated the  
 first Christians, and persecuted them to the death, as  
 our Saviour foretold, *that the time would come, when*  
*they*



S E R M. *they should put them out of their synagogues, yea and*  
 XXVIII. *kill them, thinking they did God good service; so the*  
 church of Rome hath, for many ages, used the sincere professors of the same religion, persecuting them, first with excommunication, and then with fire and faggot: and with all the violence and fury in the world endeavouring the utter extirpation and ruin of them, by bloody *Croisado's* and a barbarous *inquisition*, by treacherous *massacres*, and all sorts of *hellish plots and machinations*; witness the monstrous design of *this day*, never to be remembered or mentioned without horror, *to have destroyed at one blow, and have swallowed up in common ruin, our king and prince, and nobles, and the representative body of the whole nation*; witness the bloody massacre of *Ireland*, and all their wicked designs and practices continued to this very day.

3. And lastly, That *zeal for God* and religion, does not alter the nature of actions done upon that account. Persecution and murder of the sincere professors of religion, are *damnable sins*, and no *zeal for God and religion* can excuse them, or take away the guilt of them; *zeal for God* will justify no action that we do, unless there be *discretion* to justify our *zeal*.

There is nothing oftner misleads men, than a misguided *zeal*; it is an *ignis fatuus*, a *false fire*, which often leads men into bogs and precipices; it appears in the night, in dark and ignorant weak minds, and offers it self a guide to those who have lost their way; it is one of the most ungovernable passions of human nature, and therefore requires great knowledge and judgment to manage it, and keep it within bounds. It is like fire, a good servant, but a bad master; if it once get head, it consumes and devours all before it, and the great danger and mischief of it is, that it is most commonly found where it should not be, and possesses those most, who are least fit to govern it; and most frequently employed about what it should not be; and ten to one but it is either mistaken in  
 the

the *object*, or in the *measure* and degree of it; and S E R M. even when it is a virtue, it is a nice and dangerous XXVIII. one; for the wisest men are apt to mingle their own *passions* and *interests* with their *zeal for God and religion*. So that it is not enough that men are acted by a *zeal for God*, and so sincerely follow the dictates of their consciences; but they must be careful to inform their consciences, and not suffer themselves to be violently transported and hurried on by their own passions and prejudice, and by a blind and furious *zeal without knowledge*.

But what then? Would we have men not follow their own consciences, or act contrary to them? No, by no means: For though conscience be not our *rule*, yet it is our *immediate guide*; and he does ill, who does act against his conscience. But men must be careful how they settle their practical judgment of things, and conclude things to be lawful or unlawful, duties or sins, without reason and good ground.

God hath given us understandings to try and examine things, and the light of his word to direct us in this trial; and if we will judge rashly, and suffer our selves to be hurried by prejudice or passion, *the errors of our judgment* become *faults of our lives*: For God expects from us that we should weigh and consider what we do; and when he hath afforded us light enough to discern between *good* and *evil*, that we should carefully follow the direction of it; that we should be suspicious of ourselves, when our zeal carries us to do things that are furious and cruel, false and treacherous, and have a horrid appearance even to the light of nature; we should question *that zeal* which is so contrary to christian goodness and meekness, to peace and charity, and which tends to *confusion and every evil work*.

I will conclude all with that excellent passage of St. James, which will shew us how little regard is to be had to many men's pretences of zeal for religion, James 3. 13. *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge*

**SERM.** *knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good*  
**XXVIII.** *conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But*  
 if ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts; glory  
 not, and lye not against the truth. This wisdom descend-  
 eth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish.  
 For where zeal and strife is; there is confusion, and  
 every evil work. But the wisdom which is from above,  
 is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be en-  
 treated; full of mercy and good fruits; without parti-  
 ality, and without hypocrisy: and the fruit of righteous-  
 ness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

*Preached on*  
*Nov. 5,*  
*1686.*

## S E R M O N XXIX.

The best Man liable to the worst Treat-  
 ment, from mistaken Zealots.

+ J O H N xvi. 2.

*They shall put you out of the synagogues: Yea,  
 the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you,  
 will think that he doth God service.*

**SERM.**  
**XXIX.**

**T**H E S E words were spoken by our blessed  
 Saviour, when he was about to leave the  
 world; at the thoughts whereof, finding his  
 disciples to be exceedingly troubled, he comforts them  
 by the consideration of the great benefit and advan-  
 tage which from thence would accrue to them; he  
 tells them that he was going to heaven to intercede for  
 them, and to make way for their admission there and  
 withal



withal promifeth, that his Father would fend the Holy Ghoſt, who ſhould abundantly ſupply the want of *his* preſence with them; but he tells them at the ſame time, that they ſhould meet with very ill entertainment and uſage from the world; but ſo had *he*, chap. 15. 18. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you; and why ſhould they expect to be better treated than he was? ver. 20, remember the word that I ſaid unto you, the ſervant is not greater than the Lord; if they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you.* S E R M.  
XXIX.

And at the beginning of this chapter he tells them, that he did on purpoſe forewarn them of theſe things, to prepare their minds beforehand, and to arm them againſt the worſt that might happen; ver. 1. *theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended.* And then he declares more particularly, how far the rage and malice of men ſhould proceed againſt them, and in what kind they ſhould ſuffer: *They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice.*

So that our Saviour here foretels two ſorts of perſecution, which his diſciples ſhould be exerciſed withal, *excommunication; they ſhall put you out of their ſynagogues: And exciſion; yea the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice.* And theſe perhaps were but ſeveral kinds and degrees of *excommunication*; for the clearer underſtanding whereof, it will be requiſite briefly to explain the three degrees of *excommunication* among the Jews.

The firſt called *Niddui*, is that which our Saviour here means, by *putting out of the ſynagogue*; and which he elſewhere expreſſeth by ἀποκλεισμός, or *ſeparation*. Luke 6. 22. *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from their company.* And the effect of *this excommunication* was to exclude men from the communion of the church and people of God, and from his ſervice, which was a great diſ-

S E R M. grace ; because, after this sentence, none of the *Jews*;  
 XXIX. were to converse with them, but to look upon them  
 as *beathens and publicans*.

The second degree of this censure was called *Che-rem* ; which included the first, but extended farther, to the confiscation of goods into the sacred treasury, and devoting them to God ; after which there was no redemption of them. And of this we find express mention, *Ezra* 10. 7, 8. where it is said, *that they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem, unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem ; and that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsels of the princes and elders, all his substance should be devoted, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.*

The third degree was *Shammatha*, when the rebellious and contumacious person was anathematized and devoted, and, as some conceive, according to the law (*Levit.* 27. 29.) was to be put to death ; though other very knowing men in the Jewish learning think it amounted to no more than a final sentence, whereby they were left to the judgment of God, by some remarkable judgment of his to be cut off from the congregation of *Israel*.

Of the first and last of these degrees of excommunication, our Saviour seems here to speak ; but whether in both instances in the *text*, he alludes in the one to the lowest, and in the other to the highest degree of *excommunication* among the *Jews*, is not so certain. To the *first* he plainly does, when he says, *they shall put you out of the synagogues* : and then he adds, that they should proceed much higher against them, even to put them to death ; *the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service* ; that is, they should not only think it lawful to kill them, but look upon it as a duty, as a high act of religion, as an acceptable piece of worship, and a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. For so indeed the  
 word



*Treatment from mistaken Zealots.*

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word does not only import, but most properly signify, *whosoever killeth you shall think*, λαλῶντες ὡς εἰς θεόν τῷ  
ὅτι *that he offers a sacrifice to God*; for so the word  
λαλῶντες is sometimes used, for a sacrifice; but being  
joined with ὡς εἰς θεόν seems necessarily to be determined  
to that sense.

S E R M.  
XXIX.

From the words thus explained, I shall make these following observations, very proper for our consideration upon the occasion of *this day*.

1. That the best of men may be separated and excluded from the communion of those who may assume to themselves to be the true and the only church; yea and suffer under the notion of very bad and criminal persons. This our Saviour here foretold of his Apostles, some of the best men that ever lived: *They shall put you out of the synagogues*.

2. That they who are thus excommunicated, by the pretended true church, may nevertheless be real members of the true church of Christ, Though the Apostles were thus dealt withal by the Jewish church, they did not cease for all that to be members of the true church of God.

3. That from uncharitable censures men do easily and almost naturally proceed to cruel actions. After they had put the disciples of our Lord out of their synagogues, and thereby concluded them to be hereticks and reprobates, they presently proceed to kill them, as not worthy to live. *They shall put you out of their synagogues*; and when they have done that, they will soon after think it a thing not only fit, but pious and meritorious, to put you to death; *the time will come, that they will think it a good service to God, to kill you*.

4. That men may do the vilest things, and the most wicked, not only under a grave pretence of religion, but out of a real opinion and persuasion that they do religiously. Murder is certainly one of the greatest and most crying sins; and yet our Saviour foretels,



S E R M. that the *Jews* should put his disciples to death, being  
 XXIX. verily persuaded that in so doing they offered a most  
 acceptable sacrifice to God: *Yea, the time shall come,*  
*that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offers a*  
*sacrifice to God.*

5. That such actions are never the less horribly impious and wicked, notwithstanding the good mind with which, and the good end for which they are done. The *Jews* were not excused from the guilt of persecution and murder, for all they thought they did well in killing the disciples of our Lord.

6. I observe that the corruption of the best things is the worst. Religion is the highest accomplishment and perfection of human nature; and zeal for God and his truth an excellent quality, and highly acceptable to God: And yet nothing is more barbarous, and spurs men on to more horrible impieties, than a blind zeal for God, and false and mistaken principles in the matter of religion; as is plain from the instances here before us in the *text*. I shall speak as briefly as I can to these *observations*.

1. That the best of men may be separated and excluded from the communion of those, who may assume to be the true and only true church, and that under the notion of very bad and criminal persons. This our Saviour foretels in the *text* should be the fate of his Apostles, some of the best and holiest persons that ever lived; *they shall put you out of the synagogues.*

And what the *Jews* did in the beginning of christianity, to the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, hath been too frequently practised since, by some of the professors of christianity towards one another; and very good men have in several ages fallen under the censure of *excommunication*, and have been separated from the external communion of the church, and branded with the odious names of *hereticks* and *apostates*, by those who have arrogated to themselves  
 to

to be *the only orthodox and true church*, and have S E R M.  
gotten the external power and management of religi- XXIX.  
on into their hands; witness the case of *Athanasius* and others, in the reign and prevalency of *Arianism*; and the ill treatment, that not only particular persons, eminent for their learning and piety, but whole churches have met with in this kind, from that haughty and uncharitable church, which makes nothing of thundering out this most fearful sentence of *excommunication*, against persons, and churches much better and more christian than herself, and against all that will not submit to her pretended infallibility, and usurped authority over the souls and consciences of men.

But it is our great comfort, that the Apostles and disciples of our Lord and master were thus used, by a church that made the same pretences that they do, and upon grounds every whit as plausible, as I could clearly shew, if I were minded to pursue and make out this comparison.

2. They who are thus excommunicated, by the only pretended true church, may nevertheless be true members of the church of Christ. Though the Apostles were thus dealt withal by the Jewish church, they did not cease for all this to be real members of the true church of God. For it is not calling *hereticks* first, that proves them that do so to be no *hereticks*, or acquits them from the same or greater crimes, than those which they are so forward to charge upon other men; nor will God condemn all those who are excommunicated by men, and deny salvation to every one whom they shall please to separate from their society, and to call by some odious name. Men may be put out of the synagogue, and yet received into heaven; for the *judgment of God* is not according to the uncharitable censures of men, but *according to truth and right*.

The sentence of *excommunication* is certainly very dreadful where it is duly inflicted; and next to the

S E R M. judgment of God, men ought to be afraid of justly  
 XXIX. incurring the danger of this censure ; and it ought to  
 be upon very plain and evident grounds that men  
 either separate themselves, or endanger their being  
 cut off from the communion of the church they live  
 in : but when it once comes to this, that a church is  
 infected with gross errors and corruptions, plainly  
 contrary to the word of God, especially if that  
 church will impose her errors upon all that are of her  
 communion ; then those who refuse to comply, do  
 not *separate themselves*, but *are cut off* ; do not *de-*  
*part*, but *are driven out* of the communion of that  
 church ; and separation in that case is as innocent and  
 free from the guilt of *schism*, as the cause of it is ;  
 for the terms of communion are become such, that  
 those who are convinced of those errors and corrup-  
 tions can have no salvation, if they continue in that  
 communion, and then I am sure their salvation will  
 not be endangered by leaving it, or being excommu-  
 nicated out of it ; for that would be the hardest case  
 in the world, that men should be damned for conti-  
 nuing in the communion of such a church, and  
 damned likewise for being cast out of it.

Therefore no man ought to be terrified, because of  
 the boldness and presumption of those, who with so  
 much confidence, and so little charity, damn all that  
 are not of their communion ; for we see plainly from  
 the *text*, that men may be in the right and surest way  
 to salvation, and yet be excommunicated by those  
 who call themselves the true church, and will not al-  
 low salvation to any, but those of their own com-  
 munion. The disciples of our Lord and Saviour  
 were certainly very good men, and in a safe way of  
 salvation, tho' they were excommunicated, and put  
 out of the synagogue, by the chief priests and rulers  
 of the Jewish church. I proceed to the

3d *Observation*, which was this, that from un-  
 charitable censures, men do by an easy step and al-  
 most naturally proceed to cruel actions. After the

*Jews*



*Jews* had put the disciples of our Lord out of their S E R M. synagogues, and thereby concluded them to be *here-* XXIX. *ticks* and *reprobates*, no wonder they should proceed to kill those, whom they thought not worthy to live; *they shall put you out of their synagogues* (says our Saviour) and when they have done that, they will soon think it a thing not only fit and reasonable, but pious and meritorious, and *a good piece of service done to God, to put you to death.* Uncharitableness naturally draws on cruelty, and hardens human nature towards those, of whom we have once conceived so ill an opinion, that they are enemies to God and his truth.

And this hath been the source of the most barbarous cruelties that have been in the world; witness the severity of the heathen persecution of the Christians, which justified itself by the uncharitable opinion which they had conceived of them, that they were despisers of religion and the Gods, and consequently atheists; that they were pertinacious and obstinate in their opinions, that is, in the modern stile, they were *hereticks*. And the like uncharitable conceit among Christians hath been thought a sufficient ground (even in the judgment of the *infallible chair*) for the justification of several bloody *massacres*, and the cruel proceedings of the *inquisition* against persons suspected of heresy; for after men are once sentenced to eternal damnation, it seems a small thing to torment and destroy their bodies.

4. Men may do the vilest and most wicked things, not only under a *grave pretence* of religion, but out of a *real opinion and persuasion of mind*, that they do religiously. Murder is certainly one of the greatest and most crying sins; and yet our Saviour foretels, that the *Jews* should put his disciples to death, being *verily persuaded* that in so doing they should offer a most acceptable sacrifice to God; *yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offers a sacrifice to God.*

S E R M. Not but that the great duties and virtues of religion are very plain and easy to be understood; and so  
 XXIX.  are the contrary sins and vices: But then they are only plain to a teachable, and honest, and well-disposed mind; to those *who receive the word with meekness*, and are not blinded with wrath and furious zeal; to those that *receive the truth into an honest heart*, and *entertain it in the love of it*; they are plain to the humble and meek; *for the humble God will guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his ways*; such as *these* God seldom suffers to fall into fatal mistakes about their sin, or duty, so as *to call good evil, and evil good; to call light darkness, and darkness light*; to think uncharitableness a virtue, and downright murder a great duty.

But if men will give up themselves to be swayed by self-love and self-conceit, to be governed by any base or corrupt interest, to be blinded by prejudice, and intoxicated by pride, to be transported and hurried away by violent and furious passions; no wonder if they mistake the nature, and confound the differences of things, in the plainest and most palpable cases; no wonder if *God give up* persons of such corrupt minds *to strong delusions to believe lies*. It ought not to be strange to us, if such men bring their understandings to their wills and interests, and bend their judgments to their prejudices, make them stoop to their pride, and blindly to follow their passions, which way soever they lead them; for God usually leaves such persons to themselves, as run away from him, and is not concerned to secure those from splitting upon the most dangerous rocks, who will steer their course by no compass, but commit themselves to the wind and tide of their own lusts and passions.

In these cases men may take the wrong way; and yet believe themselves to be in the right; they may oppose the truth, and persecute the professors of it, and be guilty of the blackest crimes, and the most  
 horrid



horrid impieties, malice and hatred, blasphemy and murder ; and yet all the while be *verily persuaded*, that they are serving God, and sacrificing to him. S E R M.  
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Of this we have a plain and full instance in the Scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests and rulers among the *Jews* who because *they sought the honour of men and not that which was from God, and loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God*; because they were prejudiced against the meanness of our Saviour's birth and condition, and had upon false grounds (though as they thought upon the infallibility of tradition, and of scripture interpreted by tradition) entertained quite other notions of the *Messias*, from what he really was to be ; because they were proud and thought themselves too wise to learn of him ; and because his doctrine of humility, and self-denial, did thwart their interest and bring down their authority and credit among the people ; therefore they set themselves against him with all their might, opposing his doctrine, and blasting his reputation, and persecuting him to death ; and all this while did bear up themselves with a conceit of the *antiquity and privileges* of their church, and their profound knowledge in the law of God, and a great external shew of piety and devotion, and an arrogant pretence and usurpation of being *the only church* and people of God in the world : And by virtue of these advantages, they thought they might do any thing ; and that whosoever opposed the authority of *so ancient and good a church*, must needs be very bad men, and deserve to be proceeded against in the severest manner. As if any pretence of piety could give a privilege to do wickedly, and by how much the wiser and holier any man took himself to be, he might do so much the worse things.

There is another remarkable instance of this in St. *Paul*, who out of a blind and furious zeal for *the traditions of his fathers*, persecuted the true church of God, by imprisonment or death, and all manner of cruelties ;



SERM. cruelties; and all this while *he verily thought* that he  
 XXIX. was in the right, and *that he ought to do* all these  
 ~~~~~ things *against the name of Jesus of Nazareth*. And if  
 God had not in a miraculous manner checked him
 in his course, and changed his mind, he would have
 spent his whole life in that course of persecution and
 cruelty, and would (with Pope *Paul IV.* upon his
 death bed) have recommended *the inquisition* (or if
 he could have thought of any thing more severe) to
 the chief priests and rulers of the Jewish church.

I will not trouble you with nearer instances; though
 the Jewish church is not the only church in the
 world, that hath countenanced the destruction and
 extirpation of those who differ from them, as a piece
 of very acceptable service to God, and meritorious
 of the pardon of their sins.

5. I observe that such actions as these are never
 the less horribly wicked and impious, notwithstanding
 the good mind with which, and the good end for
 which they are done. The *Jews* were not excused
 from the guilt of persecution and murder, for all
 they thought they did well in killing the disciples of
 our Lord.

For to make an action good and acceptable to
 God, the goodness of all causes, and of all circum-
 stances, must concur; and any one defect in any of
 these, does vitiate the whole action, and spoil the
 goodness of it. We must do it with a good mind,
 being verily persuaded that what we do is good and
 acceptable to God; in which sense St. *Paul* saith, *what-*
ever is not of faith is sin; and we must do it for a
 good end, for the honour of God, and the service
 of religion, and the benefit and edification of men.
 But there is one thing wanting yet, which is often
 forgotten, but is mainly considerable, *viz.* what we
 do with a good mind, and to a good end, must be
 good and lawful in it self, commanded or allowed,
 or at least not forbidden by God: If it be; what good
 circumstances soever may belong to the action, the
 whole

whole action is stark naught ; because the very mat-
ter and substance of it is evil, and unlawful, and
damnable, though done for never so good an end. S E R M.
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So St. Paul tells us, that they *who say they might do evil, that good might come, their damnation was just.* He tells us indeed, that some would have charged this doctrine upon the christians, and particularly upon himself ; but he rejects it with the greatest detestation ; and (which is not unworthy our observation) in his epistle to the *Roman* church, as if the spirit of God, to whom all times are present, had particularly directed him to give this caution to *that church*, that in future ages they might be warned against so pernicious a principle, and all wicked practices that are consequent upon it.

And we find that St. Paul, after his conversion, did think it no sufficient plea and excuse for himself, and his persecution of the christian profession, that what he did was out of zeal for God, and his true religion, as *he was verily persuaded* ; but, notwithstanding that, acknowledgeth himself *a murderer*, and *one of the greatest sinners* ; for which, without the great mercy of God, he had perished everlastingly.

6. And lastly, I observe, that the corruption of the best things is the worst. Religion is certainly the highest accomplishment and perfection of human nature ; and zeal for God and his truth an excellent quality, and highly acceptable to God : And yet nothing is more barbarous, and spurs men on to more horrid impieties, than a blind zeal for God, and false and mistaken principles in the matter of religion.

Our Saviour compares the christian religion, and the ministers and professors of it, to salt and light, the most useful and delightful things in the world, religion enlightens the minds of men, and directs them in the way wherein they should go ; it seasons the spirits and manners of men, and preserves them from being putrified and corrupted ; but *if the salt lose its savour*, if that which should season other things,
be

SERM. be tainted it self; it is thenceforth the most insipid
 XXIX. and offensive thing in the world, *good for nothing, but*
 ~~~~~ *to be cast upon the dunghil: If the light that is in us be*  
*darkness, how great is that darkness?*

Mistakes and false principles are no where so pernicious, and of such mischievous consequence, as in religion. A blind and misguided zeal in religion is enough to spoil the best nature and disposition in the world, St. Paul (for ought appears) was of himself of a very kind and compassionate nature; and yet what a fury did his mistaken zeal make him! It is hardly credible how madly he laid about him, but that he himself gives us the account of it, *Acts 26. 9, 10, 11. I verily thought with my self (says he) that I ought to do many things, contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests. And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them, even to strange cities.*

I might descend lower, and give instances both of former and latter times, of emperors and princes, both heathen and christian, that of themselves were mild and gentle; and yet through a mistaken zeal, and the instigation of the chief priests, have been carried to cruel and bloody things. And indeed nothing gives so keen an edge, even to the mildest tempers, as an erroneous and wild zeal for God and religion; it is like quick-silver in the back of a sword that is not very sharp of itself, which gives a mighty force and weight to its blow, and makes it cut terribly.

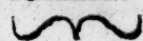
And it is very sad to consider, that the zealous prosecution of mistakes in religion, hath produced sadder and more barbarous effects in the world, and more frequently, than the ordinary corruptions and degeneracy of natural light is apt to do; as the decay



cay of the richest and most generous wines makes the sourest vinegar ; so that the pasquil or libel against pope *Urban VIII.* upon occasion of his taking off the brazen roof of the old capitol (which had held out so many ages, and that notwithstanding *Rome* had been so often sack'd by barbarous nations) and his selling it to enrich his family [*quod non fecerant Barbari, fecerunt Barberini*] may, with changing the name and occasion, be applied to a great many others ; that they have been guilty of those cruelties against Christians, upon account of difference in religion, which the most barbarous nations never exercised upon one another.

S E R M.

XXIX.



I have done with *the observations* and the *text* ; and shall I now need to make any *application* of what hath been said, to the occasion of *this day* ? The thing applies itself ; since *the horrid design of this day* was undertaken and carried on upon the same pretences and principles, upon which the *Jews* persecuted the disciples of our Lord, and much in the same method ; for the first thundered out an *excommunication* against them, and then took it for granted, that it would be *an acceptable sacrifice to God, to destroy them.*

I will not go about to aggravate *the conspiracy of this day*, it is past my skill ; nor will I extend the blame and guilt of it any farther than the plain evidence and reason of the thing does enforce. It is a thing so scandalous to *human nature*, and so great a reflection upon any *church* and *religion*, to be accessory to the contriving or countenancing of any *such design*, that I am very well contented, that it should be confined to as narrow a compass as may be, and none esteemed guilty of it, but those that were openly in it, or have since endeavoured to excuse it. All that we desire of *others*, is, that they would declare their hearty detestation of such abominable practices, and be as good as their word, and that they would  
not

S E R M. not account it *a service and sacrifice to God*, to destroy all that cannot be of their mind.

XXIX.

So that the *inference* from all this discourse, in short, shall be this, that men should take great care to inform their consciences aright, and to govern them by the plain rules of good and evil, the law of God written upon our hearts, and revealed in his word, which forbids such practices as I have been speaking of, as clearly as the sun shines at noon-day; and that we would always be afraid to do a bad thing, though gilded over with never so glorious colours, and specious pretences of zeal for God and his truth. For a man may do a thing with an honest mind, and for a religious end, and be commissioned and countenanced (as *St. Paul* was) by them who take themselves to be *the only true church* in the world; and yet at last prove to have been all the while a *blasphemer*, and a *murderer*, and *the greatest of sinners*; for none of these pretences are sufficient to warrant and sanctify a wicked action: Before this can be done, the immutable nature of good and evil must be changed.

I will conclude all with that gentle reproof of our blessed Saviour to his disciples, when their zeal for him had transported them to make that cruel request to him, that he would (as *Elias* had done upon a like occasion) *call for fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans*: *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them*; hereby declaring to us the true temper and spirit of christianity, and that they that act contrary to it, are ignorant of the nature of the christian religion; *ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them*.

## S E R M O N    X X X .

Preach'd on  
the 29th of  
May, 1693.

The Duty and Reason of praying for  
Governors.

Char. 2. habit  
of meditation

X I T I M . I I . I , 2 .

*I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

**I** Need not tell any here, that *this day* is appointed by authority for an *anniversary solemnity*, in a grateful commemoration of the great mercy of God to these nations, in putting an end to the intestine wars and confusions of many years, in restoring to us our ancient government and laws, and in bringing home, as upon *this day*, the rightful heir of these kingdoms, to the crown and throne of his fathers: And tho' the glory of *this day* hath not been a little sullied and obscured by many things which have happen'd since that time, fitter now to be buried in silence and oblivion, than to be mentioned and raked up; yet it hath pleased God, in scattering those black clouds, which not long since hung over us, to restore *this day* to its first lustre and brightness; so that we may now with great joy look back upon it, as designed by the wise providence of God, to make way for the happiness which we now enjoy under *their present*

S E R M .  
X X X .





S E R M. *sent majesties*, by whom, under God, we have been  
 XXX. deliver'd from that terrible and imminent danger  
 which threatned our *religion* and *laws*, and the very  
*constitution* it self of our *ancient government*. And  
 to this occasion, no kind of argument can be more  
 proper and suitable, than that which the *text* affords  
 to our consideration, in this injunction of St. *Paul* to  
*Timothy*, to take care that in the publick worship of  
 God, *supplications* and *thanksgivings* be put up to  
 God, *for kings, and all that are in authority*. *I ex-*  
*hort therefore, &c.*

In which words there are *four* things conside-  
 rable.

*First*, The duty here enjoyned, which is prayer ;  
 expressed to us in several words, which seem to de-  
 note the several kinds or parts of prayer ; *I exhort*  
*therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions,*  
*and giving of thanks be made for all men : For kings,*  
*and for all that are in authority, &c.* Some of these  
 words are of a very near signification ; and yet there  
 seems some difference betwixt them, most probably  
 this :

1. By *δέσεις*, which we render *supplications*, is pro-  
 bably meant that part or kind of prayer, wherein  
 we supplicate God for the pardon of our sins, and for  
 the averting and removing of evils, whether tempo-  
 ral or spiritual, from our selves or others.

2. By *προσευχαι*, which we render *prayers*, seem to  
 be meant petitions for blessings and good things from  
 God ; and these are most properly called *prayers*.

3. By *ἐντεύξεις* seems to be particularly meant plead-  
 ings and *intercessions* on the behalf of others.

4. By *ὑμναίαι* is certainly intended praises and  
*thanksgivings* to God, for his blessings and goodness  
 to our selves and others. This seems to be the difference  
 between them, which whether it be exactly so or not,  
 is not very material, since these are unquestionably  
 the several kinds or parts of prayer. All these seve-  
 ral sorts of prayer, St. *Chrysostom*, in his comment  
 upon

upon this *text*, tells us were publickly used in his SERM.  
time, in the daily service of the church; " this (says XXX.  
" he) all communicants do know is done every day,   
" morning and evening; how that we pray for all  
" the world, *for kings, and all that are in autho-*  
" *riety.*"

*Secondly*, for whom we are to pray; in general,  
*for all men.* Our prayers are one of the greatest and  
best expressions of our charity, and therefore ought  
to be as large and extensive as our charity is. We  
are bound in common charity to love all men, and to  
wish well to them; but our bare wishes signify no-  
thing, unless we direct them to God, who is able to  
confer upon them the blessings and good things which  
we wish to them.

And this is a charity which God hath put into eve-  
ry man's power, and which the poorest man in the  
world, as well as the richest, is capable of exercising  
at all times and upon all occasions: For *the ear of*  
*God is open to the prayers* of the poor, as well as of  
the rich, and they are every whit as prevalent with  
him; nay, the scripture seems to say, that God hath  
a more particular regard to the prayers of *the poor*.  
So that we may be liberal and bountiful in our prayers  
to those, to whom we are able to give nothing else;  
and when our hands cannot reach to relieve them, we  
may pour out our hearts to God for them; we may  
pray for their spiritual and temporal good, and we  
may praise God for the good which befalls them,  
though it was out of our power to be any ways in-  
strumental to procure it for them.

*Thirdly*, For whom we are more especially, and  
in the first place, to pray; *viz.* for those who have  
the greatest and most publick influence of all others,  
upon the peace and happiness of mankind, *for kings,*  
*and for all that are in authority*; that is, for the su-  
preme magistrate, and for all inferior magistrates,  
who derive their power and authority from the su-  
preme.

SERM. Government is necessary to the welfare of mankind, because it is the great band of human society, the guard of its peace, and the security of every man's person and property; and therefore we are concerned as much as is possible, both to pray for our governours, and to bless God for them; because without them we should be in a most wretched condition. Mankind would be unavoidably miserable without government; human society would presently disband, and all things would run into confusion. It is a remarkable saying of one of the Jewish masters, *pray for the happiness of the kingdom or government; for if it were not for the fear of that, men would devour one another alive.* And Josephus tells us, that *when the Jews were made subject to the Romans (tho' it was by conquest) twice a day they offered up sacrifices for the life and safety of the emperor.* And this was very agreeable to what God had commanded that people by his prophet, in a much like case, when the Jews were conquered by the king of Babylon, and carried away captives, *Jer. 29. 7. Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.* And surely the reason is much stronger, why we should pray for our natural princes and governours. I come now to the

*Fourth and last thing considered in the text, and which I principally design to speak to, namely the reason or argument which the Apostle uses, to engage us to pray for our princes, and for all that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* The manifold benefits and advantages which redound to us from our governours, is a sufficient argument why we should pray to God for them, and praise him likewise for so great a blessing, and that in the first place; *I exhort therefore first of all (saith the Apostle) &c.* Now the Apostle here in the text expresth two great advantages of govern-



government, which upon the matter do comprehend S E R M.  
all the rest.

XXX.

1. That by government we are secured in our civil rights and interests, in the quiet and peaceable possession of what is our own.

2. That we may thereby be protected in the free practice and exercise of religion and virtue.

These are the *two* greatest and most desirable things to man; and neither of these can be had without government. I shall briefly consider these two particulars, and then endeavour to shew, what obligation the consideration of them lays upon us, both to pray to God in the behalf of our princes and governours, and likewise to praise God for them: And then I shall conclude all with a brief *application* of this whole discourse to the solemn occasion of *this day*.

*First*, I shall begin with the benefits and advantages of government mentioned in the *text*, namely, these *two*.

1. That by it we are secured in our civil rights and interests, in the quiet and peaceable possession of what is our own.

Without government there could be no such thing as property in any thing beyond our own persons; for nothing but laws can make property, and laws are the effect of government and authority: Nay, without government, we have no security of our persons and lives, much less of any thing that belongs to us, and is at present in our possession. Were we not protected by laws (which are the effect of government) we could have no safety, no quiet enjoyment of any thing; but every man must be perpetually upon his guard against all the world, and exposed to continual violence and injuries from those, who are too many, and too strong for him; so that all our quiet and security from fear and danger, from the fraud and oppression of those who are more crafty and powerful than ourselves, from endless confusions and distractions, and from a state of perpetual feud and

S E R M. war with all mankind, is entirely due and owing to  
XXX. civil government.

And this alone is so unspeakable a benefit, that without it, *men*, of all creatures, would be the most miserable; because all that wit and sagacity, all that cunning and contrivance, which mankind hath above the brute creatures, would but enable them to do so much the more mischief to one another, and to devise and find out more powerful and effectual means and instruments to harm and destroy one another.

In short, that we live, and that we live well, in any tolerable condition either of safety or plenty, and that we are able to call any thing our own for one day, or for one hour; that we are not in perpetual terror and apprehension of mortal dangers, and that we are at any time free from the invasion of what we at present possess, by the fraud and force of others, is solely the effect of this great blessing and divine appointment of government, to preserve the peace of human society, and by wise and wholesome laws, to tie up mens hands from mutual injuries and violence. Upon this all the comfort and all the security of human laws does depend. From hence it comes to pass (that as the scripture expresseth it) *we may sit down every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and that there shall be none to make us afraid.* So that if security is necessary to the comfort and happiness of mankind; then government is so too: For without this, the societies of men would presently dissolve and fall in pieces, and all things would run into confusion and disorder.

2. Another great benefit which may reasonably be expected from government (though it does not always so happen) is, that men are protected by it, in the free exercise and practice of religion and virtue. Therefore we should *pray for kings, and for all that are in authority* (says the Apostle) *that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty;* that

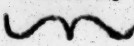
that is, in the practice of piety and devotion towards God; of sobriety and temperance in regard to ourselves; and of justice and charity toward all men. S E R M.  
XXX.

It's true indeed (and so the Apostles and first Christians found it by experience) that the edge and authority of laws may be, and sometimes is turned upon the true religion, and the sincere professors of it: But even then, though good men may receive great harms and injuries from persecuting princes and governours; (as the primitive Christians did from several of the *Roman* emperors) yet then it so happens, that good men have some considerable benefit and protection from the civil government and laws, being for the most part preserved from the fury and rage of the multitude; so that though particular persons undergo the trial of cruel sufferings, yet much greater numbers do escape and are preserved.

And which is very considerable in this matter, against several of the main and essential parts of religion, there never was any human law made; as against inward love, honour, and reverence of Almighty God, and the worshipping him in our hearts, and in secret; of this part of religion, human laws can take no cognizance: Nay, farther yet, against humility and meekness, against modesty and patience, against temperance and chastity, against peaceableness and obedience to government, against justice and gratitude, against charity and forgiveness of injuries, *against these* and such like virtues, the Apostle has told us, *there is no law*. Against the practice of these (without some of which government could not possibly subsist) no persecution was ever raised, no not by the worst of governours! on the contrary, in the practice of these virtues, good men have been in all ages and times protected by law.

'Tis true indeed, that good men have many times been grievously persecuted by the civil government and authority, *for the external profession of revealed religion*; which was the cause of the Christians at that



S E R M. time, when the Apostle commanded them *to pray for*  
 XXX. *kings and for all that were in authority; that under*  
 *their protection, they might lead quiet and peaceable lives*  
*in all godliness and honesty.* St. Paul knew very well,  
 when he gave this injunction to them, *that supplications*  
*and prayers be made for kings, and for all that are in*  
*authority,* that the powers of the world did not at that  
 time favour christianity: But he knew likewise, that  
 government was necessary to the happiness of man-  
 kind, and that Christians, even in the state of per-  
 secution, did enjoy many considerable benefits and  
 advantages by it, so that they were not perpetually  
 exposed to popular rage and cruelty, and the violence  
 of *wicked and unreasonable men*; which would not  
 only have *hindred the progress* of christianity, but  
 would in a short time have endangered *the extinguish-*  
*ing* of it. Besides, that by the favour and protection  
 of government, the Christians had many considerable  
 intervals of peace and ease, which gave christianity  
 a breathing-time, and opportunity to recover itself;  
 and though the secular authority did for a long time  
 discountenance christianity, and keep it under hatches;  
 that was but an accidental effect and abuse of govern-  
 ment, and obedience was still due, and prayers for  
 it so much the more necessary, yea and thanksgivings  
 to God for it very reasonable, upon account of  
 the common benefits and advantages of it to human  
 society.

Besides that Christians did hope and believe, that  
 the civil government might in time be gained, to  
 give its countenance and assistance to christianity, and  
 that *kings and princes might become nursing fathers to*  
*the church,* as was expressly foretold by the prophets,  
 and afterwards in Gods due time was remarkably ac-  
 complished. In the mean time Christians were pa-  
 tiently to obey and suffer, in expectation of those glo-  
 rious rewards in another world, which were promised  
 to their faith and patience; and to pray for the  
 powers that persecuted them, that *they also might be*  
*brought*

brought to the acknowledgment of the truth, and might use that power which God had committed to them, for the protection of truth and innocency, and for the continuance and support of the true religion; which, blessed be God, was afterwards the case of christianity for several ages. I proceed in the

*Second* place, to shew what obligation the consideration of the mighty benefits and advantages of government lays upon us, both to pray to God on the behalf of princes and governours, and likewise to praise God for them.

Because in their welfare and prosperity the publick peace and happiness doth chiefly consist, and in the publick good consists the good of particular persons; and above all the piety and goodness of princes and magistrates (especially those who are in the highest place of authority) have a general good influence upon the manners of men, both for the discountenancing of wickedness and vice, and for the encouragement of religion and virtue, which are the main pillars and foundation of publick peace and prosperity. *A king sitting in the throne of judgment* (saith Solomon, Prov. 20. 8.) *scattereth away all evil with his eyes.* The pattern of a religious good prince is a *living law* to his subjects, and more than the example of ten thousand others, to mould and fashion the manners of the people to a conformity to it.

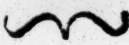
Besides that there is (as one expresseth) a kind of *moral* connexion and communication of evil and of guilt betwixt princes and people, so that they are many times mutually rewarded for the virtues and good actions, and punished for the sins and faults of one another. Of which proceedings of the divine justice towards the people of *Israel*, there are many remarkable instances in scripture, where God rewarded the piety of good princes with great blessings upon their people, and punished the personal faults of their kings with publick judgments upon the whole nation. So that in truth it is the greatest kindness and charity

S E R M. to ourselves, to pray for our princes and governours;  
 XXX. because *our* welfare is involved in *theirs*, and we suffer  
 not only in all the misfortunes and calamities which  
 befall them, but many times upon account of their personal faults and miscarriages. *Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*, the extravagances of princes are punished in the misfortunes of their subjects. Thus *David* (otherwise a very good king) sinned in numbering the people, and the plague fell upon *them*; he was punished in the calamity of his people. And this was in no wise unjust, because there are always sins enough in any nation to deserve punishment, and God may take what occasion he pleases, to send his judgments upon them that deserve them; for princes and people make but one civil and political body, and what part of it soever is punished, the other suffers. And this is the true ground and reason of the communication of punishments betwixt princes and people.

Another consideration which should engage us to pray for those that are in authority, is, that we reap the great benefit of their care, and pains, and vigilancy for us, *under their shadow we are safe*. Our innocency and our rights are protected by their power and laws, and by the just punishments which they inflict upon evil-doers, and upon those who go about to violate our rights in any kind; so that we ought to pray and to praise God for them, as our great benefactors, and the chief instruments of our security and welfare; and therefore not only in duty, but in justice and gratitude, we are bound to wish all good to them, and to intercede with God for them, for the peace and prosperity of their government, and to bless God on their behalf: Yea, we ought to do this out of love to ourselves; because *their* good and prosperity is *ours*, *their* goodness and righteousness, *their* personal piety and virtues extend to *us*, and have a mighty influence upon us, to excite and encourage us to follow their good example, and to go and do likewise.

And



And we ought likewise to do this out of charity and S E R M.  
 compassion to our princes and governours, whose con- XXX.  
 dition is in truth rather to be pitied than envied, and   
 whose high place and dignity is much more to be  
 dreaded than desired by a wise man, considering how  
 heavy a burden they sustain, what dangers they are  
 continually exposed to, what cares, and troubles, and  
 censures they daily undergo, for our safety and ease.  
 So that whatever ambitious and inconsiderate men  
 may *think*, wise men do certainly *know* and find by  
 experience, that to discharge with care and faithfulness  
 all the parts of a good governour, is a very difficult  
 and troublesome province. Inferiour magistrates  
 find care and trouble enough, in that small share and  
 part of it which they sustain; and if so, then certainly  
 the care and concernment of *the whole*, must needs be  
 a heavy burden indeed; and what abilities are sufficient  
 for it, what shoulders are strong enough to stand  
 under it?

And as upon this account they have the greatest  
 need of our prayers, for God's direction and assistance  
 in the discharge of their high office, so likewise for  
 his powerful grace to preserve them from sin and evil,  
 in the midst of those manifold temptations to which  
 they are continually exposed, in appearance much  
 beyond other men, from the height of their condition,  
 and the extent of their power, which are strong temptations  
 to weak minds, to pride and insolency, to injustice  
 and oppression; from the abundance of all things,  
 which minister to luxury and excess; and from the  
 officious servility of *parasites* and *flatterers*, who  
 soothe them in their faults, and humour them in their  
 passions, and comply with their corrupt and vicious  
 inclinations, and are always ready at hand, and forward  
 instruments to execute their commands, and to serve  
 their lusts and vices.

And as princes greatly need our prayers upon these  
 accounts; so it is just matter of praise and thankfulness  
 to God, when a nation hath wise, just, and  
 good

SERM. good princes, who lay to heart the interests of their  
 XXX. people, and endeavour by all the wise methods and  
 ~ ~ ~ honest arts of government, effectually to procure it ;  
 who by their authority and due execution of the law,  
 do discountenance, and, as much as in them lies,  
 restrain wickedness and vice ; and by their own ex-  
 ample encourage virtue and piety in their subjects ;  
 and thereby invite, and even provoke them to the  
 like practices ; the life of a good prince is a kind of  
*publick censure* of ill manners, and reproof of wicked  
 practices. And I do not know whether there be a  
 more delightful sight on this side heaven, than to see  
 those who are in eminent place and power, even if  
 they might do whatever they would, yet continually  
 chusing to do what they ought ; as if their power  
 were so far from being a temptation to them to do  
 evil, that on the contrary, the consideration of it is  
 one of the best and strongest arguments to restrain  
 them from it.

Weak minds are apt to measure their *liberty* by their  
*power*, and to think that the higher and greater they  
 are, so much the greater privilege they have to be  
 more extravagantly bad than others : But if the mat-  
 ter be really considered, the argument runs the other  
 way ; and he that reasons wisely, will certainly con-  
 clude with *Tully*, in *maximâ quaque fortunâ minimum*  
*licere*, that they who are in the highest station, and great-  
 est power, have of all others the least liberty to do what  
 they list. Their power, supposing it never so un-  
 controulable, and unaccountable, would be so far  
 from being in reason a temptation to them to do what  
 they ought not, that in truth it would set them above  
 the temptation of doing an ill thing ; because they  
 would stand in awe of no body, and there would be  
 nothing that could hinder them from doing what is  
 best, if they had a mind to it ; and every one ought  
 to have such a mind ; and nothing can be more mis-  
 becoming, and more directly contrary to the nature  
 of their office, and the power wherewith they are in-  
 trusted

trusted, than to give an example of breaking those laws, which they are to put in execution. S E R M.  
XXX.

God himself, because he hath *all power*, is therefore *all goodness*, and is therefore *holy in all his ways*, and *righteous in all his works*, according to the reasoning of the author of the book of *wisdom*, who argues thus with God, *It is not* (says he) *agreeable with thy power to condemn him that hath not deserved to be punished*; that is, it is not agreeable with infinite power, to do any thing that is unjust; *for thy power* (saith he to God) *is the beginning of righteousness*, and *because thou art the Lord of all*, *it maketh thee to be gracious unto all*. Infinite power is the foundation and principle of goodness and righteousness, and all-powerful being is good and righteous, not only from *choice*, but from a *necessity of nature*.

And this is the true ground and reason of *that saying* of St. *James*, that *God cannot be tempted with evil*, because his infinite power sets him above all temptation to it: For what reason can be imagined, why he that hath all power, shall have any inclination to be otherwise than good? What can tempt him thereto? Since he that hath all power can neither have any hopes of being greater than he is, nor any fear of becoming less; and all temptation is founded either in hope or fear, and where neither of these can have any place, there can be no occasion, no possible motive or temptation to evil; for *to be evil*, and *to do evil*, is always an effect of *weakness* and *want of power*.

The sum of what I have said upon this argument, and the design indeed of it, is to shew, that the greater power and authority any one hath, the less liberty he hath to do any thing that is bad. And I have been the larger upon this, because I would fain imprint upon the minds of persons, whom the providence of God hath invested with great power and authority, that as they have great opportunities of doing more good than others, so they have greater reason, and  
more



S E R M. more advantages of doing it, and are more inexcusable if they do any thing that is bad; not only because  
 XXX. their actions are of a more publick influence and observation; but because their temptations to evil, how great soever they may seem to be, are in truth and reality much less than other mens. Happy are those princes, that wisely consider this, and make their power and authority over others, an argument to be so much better themselves, and to do so much more good to others; and because they are less subject to *the coercive power of law*, do for that reason think themselves so much the more obliged to be *a law to themselves*. Blessed be God for the happiness which we enjoy in this respect; and let us earnestly beseech him that he would be pleased to bestow such a plentiful measure of his grace and holy spirit on our most gracious king and queen, as may effectually both engage and enable them to use their power to the best purposes for *the publick good*.

And thus I have briefly gone over, and explained to you the several particulars in the *text*: *the duty of prayer* here enjoined; *for whom* we are to pray, in general *for all men*; and for whom more especially, and *in the first place*; *for kings, and all that are in authority*; and *upon what considerations* we are to pray for them; and to praise God in their behalf; because of the great benefits we receive by them; and because both in respect of the dangers and difficulties of their condition, they stand in need of our prayers above other men; besides that in praying for their welfare and prosperity, we pray for our own peace and happiness.

And now to *apply* this to ourselves, and to the occasion of *this day*. By all that hath been said, we cannot but be convinced what cause we have to bless God for *that happy government* which we live under, *that excellent constitution*, under the gentle influences whereof *we* enjoy more liberty, more plenty, and more security from all manner of injury and oppression,

pression, than *any nation* this day on the face of the earth. Therefore with what thankfulness should we *this day* commemorate the happy restoration of this government to us, after the miserable distractions and confusions of twenty years, by the restoration and return of our banished *sovereign*, in so peaceable, and yet so wonderful a manner, that a remembrance of it, even at this distance, is almost still matter of amazement to us!

S E R M.  
XXX.

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who alone doth wondrous things.*

And with our joyful praises, let us join our most devout and fervent prayers to Almighty God, *for the king's and queen's majesties, and for all that are in authority.* And I may truly say, that there was hardly ever greater reason and occasion for it, from both our distractions at home, and our dangers from abroad; never was there greater need of our earnest supplications and prayers, than at *this* time, when our armies and fleets are in motion, and when God seems already to have given us some earnest of good success; blessed be his great and glorious name.

We have indeed a great army, and a more powerful fleet, than ever this nation sent forth; but unless God be on our side, and favour our cause, in vain are all our preparations; for whenever his providence is pleased to interpose, *by strength shall no man prevail.* Have we not reason then to *cry mightily unto God*, when the only strength of the nation is at stake, when our sins and provocations are so many and great, and there lies so heavy a load of guilt upon us? When the person of his sacred majesty is exposed to so much hazard, not only *in the high places of the field*, but from the *restless attempts* of the malicious and implacable enemies of our peace and religion, *that he would be graciously pleased to go forth with our armies and fleets, and not remember our iniquities against us, but save us for his mercies sake?*

We

S E R M. We are too apt to murmur and complain of mis-  
 XXX. carriages, and the ill management of affairs; but  
 surely the best thing we can do, and that which best  
 becomes us, is to look forward, and to turn our cen-  
 sures of our governours and their actions, into hum-  
 ble supplications to God in their behalf, and in be-  
 half of the whole nation; *that he would be pleased to*  
*turn us every one from the evil of our ways, that he*  
*may return to us, and have mercy on us, that so ini-*  
*quity may not be our ruin; that he may rejoice over us to*  
*do us good, and may at last think thoughts of peace to-*  
*wards us, thoughts of good and not of evil, to give us an*  
*expected end of our troubles.*

Let us then betake ourselves to the proper work  
 of *this day*, hearty prayers and thanksgivings to *Almigh-*  
*ty God*, for the king and queen, and for all that are in  
 authority; *that as he hath been pleased by a wonderful*  
*providence, to rescue us from the imminent danger we*  
*were in, and from all our fears, by the happy advance-*  
*ment of their majesties to the throne of these kingdoms;*  
*so he would of his infinite goodness still preserve and con-*  
*tinue to us this light of our eyes, and breath of our*  
*nostrils, princes of that great clemency and goodness,*  
*which render them the true representatives of God upon*  
*earth, and the most gracious governours of men.*

And let us earnestly beseech him, *that he would*  
*confirm and strengthen them in all goodness, and make*  
*them wise as angels of God, to discern betwixt good and*  
*evil, that they may know how to go in and out before*  
*this great people; that he would give them the united af-*  
*fections of their people, and a heart to study and seek their*  
*good all the days of their lives.*

And finally, *That he would be pleased to continue so*  
*great a blessing to us, and to grant them a long and*  
*prosperous reign over us; and that their posterity in*  
*this royal family may endure for ever, and their throne*  
*as the days of heaven; that under them the people of*  
*these nations, we and the generations to come, may*  
*lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and*  
*honesty;*



honesty; for his mercies sake in Jesus Christ, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all honour, glory, dominion and power, now and for ever. Amen.

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## S E R M O N XXXI.

*Preached in  
the Chapel  
of Lambeth  
House on  
Christmas-  
Day, 1691.*

The Love of God to Men, in the Incarnation of Christ.

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x I JOHN iv. 9.

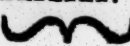
*In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

THESE words contain a clear and evident demonstration of the love of God to us; in S E R M.  
XXXI.  
*this was manifested the love of God towards us; that is, by this it plainly appears, that God had a mighty love for us, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In which we may consider this threefold evidence of God's love to mankind.*

I. That he should be pleased to take our case into consideration, and to concern himself for our happiness.

II. That he should design so great a benefit to us, which is here exprest by life; *that we might live through him.*

III. That

S E R M. III. That he was pleased to use such a means for  
 XXXI. the obtaining and procuring of this benefit for us; *he*  
 *sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might*  
*live through him.* Each of these singly is a great evi-  
 dence of God's love to us; much more all of them  
 together.

I. It is a great evidence of the love of God to mankind, that he was pleased to take our case into consideration, and to concern himself for our happiness. Nothing does more commend an act of kindness, than if there be great condescension in it. We use to value a small favour, if it be done to us by one that is far above us, more than a far greater done to us by a mean and inconsiderable person. This made *David* to break out into such admiration, when he considered the ordinary providence of God towards mankind. *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him! or the Son of man, that thou shouldst consider him!* This is a wonderful condescension indeed, for God to be mindful of *man*.

At the best we are but his creatures, and upon that very account at an infinite distance from him; so that were not he infinitely good, he would not be concerned for us, who are so infinitely beneath the consideration of his love and pity. Neither are we of the highest rank of creatures; we are much below the Angels, as to the excellency and perfection of their beings; so that if God had not had a peculiar pity and regard to the sons of men, he might have placed his affection and care upon a much nobler order of creatures, than we are, and so much the more miserable, because they fell from a higher step of happiness, I mean the lost Angels; but yet for reasons best known to his infinite wisdom, God passed by them, and was pleased to consider *us*. This the Apostle to the *Hebrews* takes notice of, as an argument of God's peculiar and extraordinary love to mankind, that *he sent his Son, not to take upon him the nature of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham.*

Now

Now that *he*, who is far above us, and after that S E R M. we by wilful transgression had lost ourselves, had no XXXI. obligation to take care of us, but what his own goodness laid upon him, that he should concern himself so much for us, and be so solicitous for our recovery, this is a great evidence of his kindness and goodwill to us, and cannot be imagined to proceed from any other cause.

II. Another evidence of God's great love to us, is, that he was pleased to design so great a benefit for us. This the scripture expresseth to us by *life*; and it is usual in scripture to express the best and most desirable things by *life*; because as it is one of the greatest blessings, so it is the foundation of all other enjoyments: And therefore the apostle useth but this one word to express to us all the blessings and benefits of Christ's coming into the world; *God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

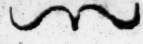
And the expression is very proper in our case; because *life* signifies the reparation of all that which was lost by the fall of man. For man by his wilful degeneracy and apostacy from God, is sunk into a state of sin and misery, both which the scripture is wont to express by *death*. In respect of our sinful state we are spiritually dead; and in respect of the punishment and misery due to us for our sins, we are judicially dead, dead in law; for *the wages of sin is death*. Now God hath sent his Son into the world, that in both these respects *we might live through him.*

I. We are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, as the apostle speaks, *Eph. 2. 1, 2. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world.* Every wicked man, though in a natural sense he be alive, yet in a moral sense he is dead. So the apostle speaking of those *who live in sinful lusts and pleasures*, says of them that *they are dead while they live*, 1 Tim. 5, 6. What corrupt humours are



S E R M. to the body, that sin is to the soul, their disease and  
 XXXI. their death. Now God sent his Son to deliver us  
 from this death, by renewing our nature, and mortifying our lusts; by restoring us to the life of grace and holiness, and *destroying the body of sin in us, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* And that this is a great argument of the mighty love of God to us, the apostle tells us, *Eph. 2. 4, 5. God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.* It is an argument of the riches of God's mercy, and of his great love to us, to recover us out of this sad and deplorable case. It is a kindness infinitely greater, than to redeem us from the most wretched slavery, or to rescue us from the most dreadful and cruel temporal death; and yet we should value this as a favour and benefit, that could never be sufficiently acknowledged: But God hath sent his Son to deliver us from a worse bondage, and a more dreadful kind of death; so that well might the apostle ascribe this great deliverance of mankind from the slavery of our lusts, and the death of sin, to the boundless mercy and love of God to us. *God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ, even when we were dead in sins;* when our case was so desperate as could well be imagined; then was God pleased to undertake this great cure, and to provide such a remedy, as cannot fail to be effectual for our recovery, if we will but make use of it.

2. We were likewise judicially dead in law, being condemned by the just sentence of it. So soon as ever we sinned, eternal death was by the sentence of God's law become our due portion and reward; and this being our case, God in tender commiseration and pity to mankind, was pleased to send his Son into the world, to interpose between the justice of God and the demerits of men; and by reversing the sentence that was gone out against us, and procuring a pardon for us, to rescue us from the misery  
 of

of eternal death ; and not only so, but upon the S E R M.  
condition of faith and repentance, of obedience and XXXI.  
a holy life, to bestow eternal life upon us ; and by   
this means to restore us to a better condition than  
that from which we were fallen, and to advance us  
to a happiness greater than that of innocency.

And was not this great love, to design and provide so great a benefit and blessing for us, *to send his Son Jesus to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities?* Our blessed Saviour, who came from the bosom of his Father, and knew his tender affection and compassion to mankind, speaks of this as a most wonderful and unparalleled expression of his love to us, *John 3. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son. God so loved the world, so greatly, so strangely, so beyond our biggest hopes, nay, so contrary to all reasonable expectations, as to send his only-begotten Son, to seek and to save the sinful sons of men.*

If it had only in general been declared to us, that God was about to send his son into the world upon some great design, and been left to us to conjecture, what his errand and business should be ; how would this have alarmed the guilty consciences of sinful men, and filled them with infinite jealousies and suspicion, with fearful expectations of *wrath and fiery indignation to consume them* ; for considering the great wickedness and degeneracy of mankind, what could we have thought, but that surely God was sending his Son upon a design of vengeance to chastise a sinful world, to vindicate the honour of his despised laws, and to revenge the multiplied affronts which had been offered to the highest majesty of heaven, by his pitiful and ungrateful creatures ; our own guilt would have been very apt to have filled us with such imaginations as these, that in all likelihood the Son of God was coming to judgment, to call the wicked world to an account, to proceed against his Father's rebels, to pass sentence upon them, and to execute the vengeance which they had deserved. This we

I i 2

might

S E R M. might justly have dreaded; and indeed considering  
 XXXI. our case, how ill we have deserved at God's hands,  
 and how highly we have provoked him; what other  
 weighty matter could we hope for.

But the goodness of God hath strangely out-done our hopes, and deceived our expectation; so it follows in the next words, *God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world* (intimating that this we might justly have imagined and feared) but upon a quite contrary design, *that through him the world might be saved*. What a surprize of kindness is here! that instead of *sending his Son to condemn us*, he should *send him into the world to save us*; to rescue us from the jaws of death and hell, from that eternal and intolerable misery which we had incurred and deserved!

And if he had proceeded no farther, this had been wonderful mercy and kindness: But his love stopt not here, it was not contented to spare us, and free us from misery; but was restless till it had found out a way to bring us to happiness; for *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son*, not only *that whosoever believes in him might not perish*, but *might have everlasting life*. This is the *second* evidence of God's great love to us, the greatness of the blessing and benefit which he had designed and provided for us, *that we might live through him*; not only be delivered from spiritual and eternal death, but be made partakers of eternal life.

III. The last evidence of God's great love to us, which I mentioned, was this, that God was pleased to use such a means, for the obtaining and procuring of this great blessing and benefit; *he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*. And this will appear to be great love indeed, if we consider these *four* things.

1. The person whom he was pleased to employ upon this design; *he sent his only-begotten Son*.

2. How much he abased him, in order to the effecting and accomplishing of this design, implied in these words, *he sent him into the world*.



3. If we consider to whom he was sent, to *the world*. And, SERM.  
XXXI.

4. That he did all that voluntarily and freely, out of his mere pity and goodness; not constrained hereto by any necessity, not prevailed upon by any application or importunity of ours, nor obliged by any benefit or kindness from us.

1. Let us consider the person whom God was pleased to employ in this design, *he sent his only-begotten Son*; no less person than *his own Son*, and no less dear to him, than *his only-begotten Son*.

(1.) No less person than *his own Son*; and the dignity of the person that was employed in our behalf, doth strangely heighten and set off the kindness. What an endearment is it of the mercy of our redemption, that God was pleased to employ upon this design no meaner person than *his own Son, his begotten Son*; so he is called in the text, *his Son*, in so peculiar a manner *as no creature is, or can be*; the creatures below man are called the works of God, but never his children; the angels are in scripture called the sons of God; and *Adam* likewise is called the Son of God, because God made him after his own image and likeness in holiness and righteousness, and in his dominion and sovereignty over the creatures below him; but this title of *begotten Son of God* was never given to any of the creatures, man or angel; *for unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, as the apostle reasons, *Heb. 1. 5*. He must be a great person indeed to whom this title belongs, of *the begotten Son of God*; and it must be a mighty love indeed which moved God to employ so great a person, on the behalf of so pitiful and wretched creatures as we are. It had been a mighty condescension for God to treat with us at all; but that no less person than *his own Son* should be the ambassador, is an astonishing regard of heaven to poor sinful dust and ashes.

(2.) The person was as dear to God, as he was great; he was *his only-begotten Son*. It had been a

S E R M. great instance of *Abraham's* love and obedience, to  
 XXXI. God, to have sacrificed *a son* at his command; but  
 this circumstance makes it much greater, that it was  
 his *only Son*; hereby I know that thou fearest God (says  
 the Angel) *since thou hast not withheld thy son, thine  
 only son from me.* This is a demonstration that God  
 loved us at a stupendous rate, when he would send  
 his *only-begotten Son* into the world for us.

Before this, God had tried several ways with man-  
 kind, and employed several messengers to us; some-  
 times he sent his Angels, and many times his servants  
 the prophets; *but in these last days he hath sent his Son.*  
 He had many more servants to have employed upon  
 this message, but he had but *one Son*; and rather  
 than mankind should be ruined and lost, he would  
 send him. Such was the love of God towards us,  
 that rather than our recovery should not be effected,  
 he would employ in this work the greatest and dearest  
 person to him both in heaven and earth, his *only-be-  
 gotten Son*; in this was the love of God manifested, that he  
 sent his *only-begotten Son*, that we might live through him.

Let us consider how much this glorious and excellent  
 person was abased in order to the effecting and accom-  
 plishing of this design, which is here expressed by  
*sending him into the world*; and this comprehends his  
 incarnation, with all the mean and abasing circum-  
 stances of it. This the Apostle declares fully to us,  
*Phil. 2. 6, 7.* though *he was in the form of God* (that  
 is, truly and really God) yet *he made himself of no re-  
 putation*, *ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσας*, *he emptied himself*, was contented  
 to be strangely lessened and diminished, and took up-  
 on him the form of a servant, or slave, and was made  
*in the likeness of men*; that is, did really assume hu-  
 man nature. Here was an abasement indeed, for God  
 to become man, for the *only-begotten Son of God* to take  
 upon him the form of a servant, and to become obedient  
 to death, even the death of the cross which was the death  
 of slaves, and infamous malefactors. Here was love  
 indeed, that God was willing that his own dear Son  
 should be thus obscured and diminished, and become so



so mean and miserable for our sakes ; that he should not S E R M. only stoop to be made man, and to dwell among us, but XXXI. that he should likewise submit to the infirmities of our nature, and to be made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted ; that he should be contented to bear so many affronts and indignities from perverse and unthankful men, and to endure such contradiction of sinners against himself ; that he who was the brightness of his Father's glory, should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and rather than we should perish, should put himself into our place, and be contented to suffer and die for us ; and that God should be willing that all this should be done to his only Son, to save sinners. What greater testimony could he give of his love to us ?

3. Let us consider farther to whom he was sent, which is also implied in these words, *he sent his Son into the world* ; into a wicked world, that was altogether unworthy of him ; and an ungrateful world, that did most unworthily use him.

*First*, Into a wicked world, that was altogether unworthy of him, that had deserved no such kindness at his hands. For what were *we*, that God should send such a person amongst us, that he should make his Son stoop so low, as to dwell in our nature, and to become one of us ? We were rebels and enemies, *enemies to God by evil works*, up in arms against heaven, and at open defiance with God our maker. When the world was in this posture of enmity and hostility against God ; then he sent his Son to treat with us, and to offer us peace. What can more commend the love of God, than this that he should shew such kindness to us, when we were sinners and enemies ? herein *God hath commended his love towards us* ; (says the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 8.*) in that *whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Secondly*, Into an ungrateful world, that did most unworthily use him, that gave no becoming entertainment to him (*the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests ; but the Son of man had not where to lay*

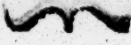


S E R M. *his head*) that heaped all manner of contumelies and  
 XXXI. indignities upon him, that persecuted him all his life,  
 and at last put him to a most painful and shameful death;  
 in a word, that was so far from receiving him as *the*  
*Son of God*, that they did not treat him with common  
 humanity, and like *one of the Sons of men*.

4. He did all this voluntarily and freely; *God sent his Son into the world, mero motu*, of his own mere grace and goodness, moved by nothing but his own bowels, and the consideration of our misery; not over-powered by any force; (for what could offer violence to him *to whom all power belongs?*) not constrained by any necessity, for he had been, happy though we had remained for ever miserable; he might have chosen other objects of his love and pity, and have left us involved in that misery, which we had wilfully brought upon ourselves.

Nor was he prevailed upon by any application from us, or importunity of ours to do this for us. Had we been left to have contrived the way of our recovery; this which God hath done for us, could never have entered into the heart of man to have imagined, much less to have desired it at his hands. If the way of our salvation had been put into the hands of our own counsel and choice, how could we have been so impudent as to have begged of God, that *his only Son* might descend from heaven and *become man*, be poor, despised and miserable for our sakes? God may stoop as low as he pleaseth, being secure of his own majesty and greatness; but it had been a boldness in us, not far from blasphemy, to have desired of him to condescend to such a submission.

Nor, *lastly*, was he pre-obliged by any kindness or benefit from us; so far from that, that we had given him all possible provocation to the contrary, and had reason to expect the effect of his heaviest displeasure; And yet though *he* was the *pars læsa*, the party that had been disobliged and injured; though *we* were first in the offence and provocation, *he* was pleased to make the first overtures of peace and reconciliation; and  
 though

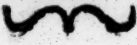
though it was wholly *our* concernment, and not *his*; S E R M.  
yet he was pleased to condescend so far, to our per- XXXI.  
verseness and obstinacy, as to *send his Son to us*, and   
to beseech us to be reconciled.

Now *herein* (says the Apostle immediately after the text) *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*: Herein is the love of God manifested, that the kindness began on *his* part, and not on *ours*; that being neither obliged nor desired by us, he did freely and of his own accord, *send his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*.

What now remains but to apply this to ourselves?

1. Let us propound to ourselves the love of God for our pattern and example. This is the inference which the Apostle makes in the next verse but one after the text, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*. One would have thought the inference should have been, *if God so loved us, that we ought also to love him*. But the Apostle doth not speak so much of the affection, as the effect of love; and his meaning is, if God hath bestowed such benefits upon us, we ought, in imitation of him, to be kind and beneficial one to another. Not but that we ought *to love God with all our hearts, and souls, and strength*; but in this sense we are not capable of it. We cannot be beneficial to him; because he is self-sufficient, and stands in need of nothing; and therefore the Apostle adds this as a reason, why he does not exhort men to love God, but one another; *no man hath seen God at any time*; he is not sensible to us, and therefore none of these sensible things can signify any thing to him. But he hath friends and relations here in the world, who are capable of the sensible effects of our love, and to whom we may shew kindness for his sake; we cannot be beneficial to God, but we may tell him our love to him, by our kindness and charity to men who are made after the image of God; and if we see any one miserable, that is consideration enough to move our charity. There was nothing but this in

SER M. us to move him to pity us, *when we were in our blood,*  
 XXXI. *and no eye pitied us.*

 God is a pattern of the most generous kindness and charity. Though he be infinitely above us, yet he thought it not below him to consider our case, and to employ his only Son to save us; he had no obligation to us, no expectation of advantage from us, and can never be in a possibility to stand in need of us; and yet he loved us, and hath conferred the greatest benefits upon us; so that no man can have deserved so ill at our hands, but that if he be in want, and we in a condition to help him, he ought to come within the compass and consideration of our charity.

And *this* is the proper season for it, when we commemorate the greatest blessing and benefit that was ever conferred on mankind, *The Son of God sent into the world, on purpose to redeem and save us.* And therefore I cannot but very much commend the custom of feeding and relieving the poor, more especially at *this time*, when the poor do usually stand most in need of it, and when we commemorate *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being rich became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich.*

2. Let us readily comply with the great design of this great love of God to mankind. *He hath sent his Son that we may live through him.* But though he hath done all this for us, though he hath purchased so great blessings for us, as the pardon of our sins, and power against them, and eternal life and happiness; yet there is something to be done on our parts, to make us partakers of these benefits. God hath not so loved us, as to send his Son into the world, to carry men to heaven whether they will or no; and to rescue those from the slavery of the devil, and the damnation of hell, who are fond of their fetters, and wilfully run themselves upon ruin and destruction. But the Son of God came to offer happiness to us, upon certain terms and conditions, such as are fit for God to propound, and necessary for us to perform, to make us capable of the blessedness which he offers;



as namely, *repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; a sincere and constant endeavour of obedience to the laws and precepts of our holy religion. S E R M.  
XXXI.

These are the terms of the Gospel; and *the grace of God which brings salvation*, offers it only upon these terms, *that we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*: then we may expect the blessed hope. But if we will not submit to these conditions, the Son of God will be no Saviour to us; for *he is the author of eternal salvation only to them that obey him*. If men will continue in their sins, the redemption wrought by Christ will be of no advantage to them; such as obstinately persist in an impenitent course, *ipsa si velit Salus, servare non potest*, *Salvation it self cannot save them*.

These are the conditions of our happiness, and if we submit to them we are *heirs of eternal life*; if we refuse, we are *sons of perdition*, eternally lost and undone; for we may assure ourselves, that these are the best and easiest terms that can ever be offered to us, because God sent them by *his Son*. This is the last effort of the divine love and goodness, towards the recovery and salvation of men; so the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 1. 1, 2.* that *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake to the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*; and if we refuse to hear him, he will speak no more. After this it is not to be expected, that God should make any farther attempts for our recovery; for he can send no greater nor dearer person to us, than *his own Son*; and if we refuse him, whom will we reverence? If after this we still willfully go on in our sins; *there remains no more sacrifice for sin; but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to consume us*.

3. With what joy and thankfulness should we commemorate this great love of God to mankind, in  
*sending*

S E R M. *sending his only-begotten Son into the world, that we*  
 XXXI. *might live through him !*

~~~~~ This is the proper end of the blessed sacrament, which we are now going to receive, to represent to our minds the incarnation and passion of our dear Lord, by the symbols of his body broken, and his blood shed for us. With what acknowledgments should we celebrate the memory of this wonderful love, which the Son of God hath shewn to the sons of men ; endeavouring to make all the world in love with him, who hath so loved all mankind !

Whenever we see his blood poured forth, and his body broken for us, so moving a sight should raise strange passions in us, of love to our Saviour, and hatred to our sins ; and should inspire us with mighty resolutions of service and obedience to him ; and whenever the pledges and seals of these benefits are delivered into our hands, the sight of them should at once wound and revive our hearts, and make us to cry out, *Lord, how unworthy am I, for whom thou shouldest do and suffer all this ! I am overcome by thy love, and can no longer hold out, against the mighty force of such kindness ! I render myself to thee, and will serve thee for ever, who hast redeemed me at so dear a rate.*

Now to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb that was slain, to God even our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

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The End of the FOURTH VOLUME.